HANDKE'S JOURNEY OF LIES—BY PETER SCHNEIDER

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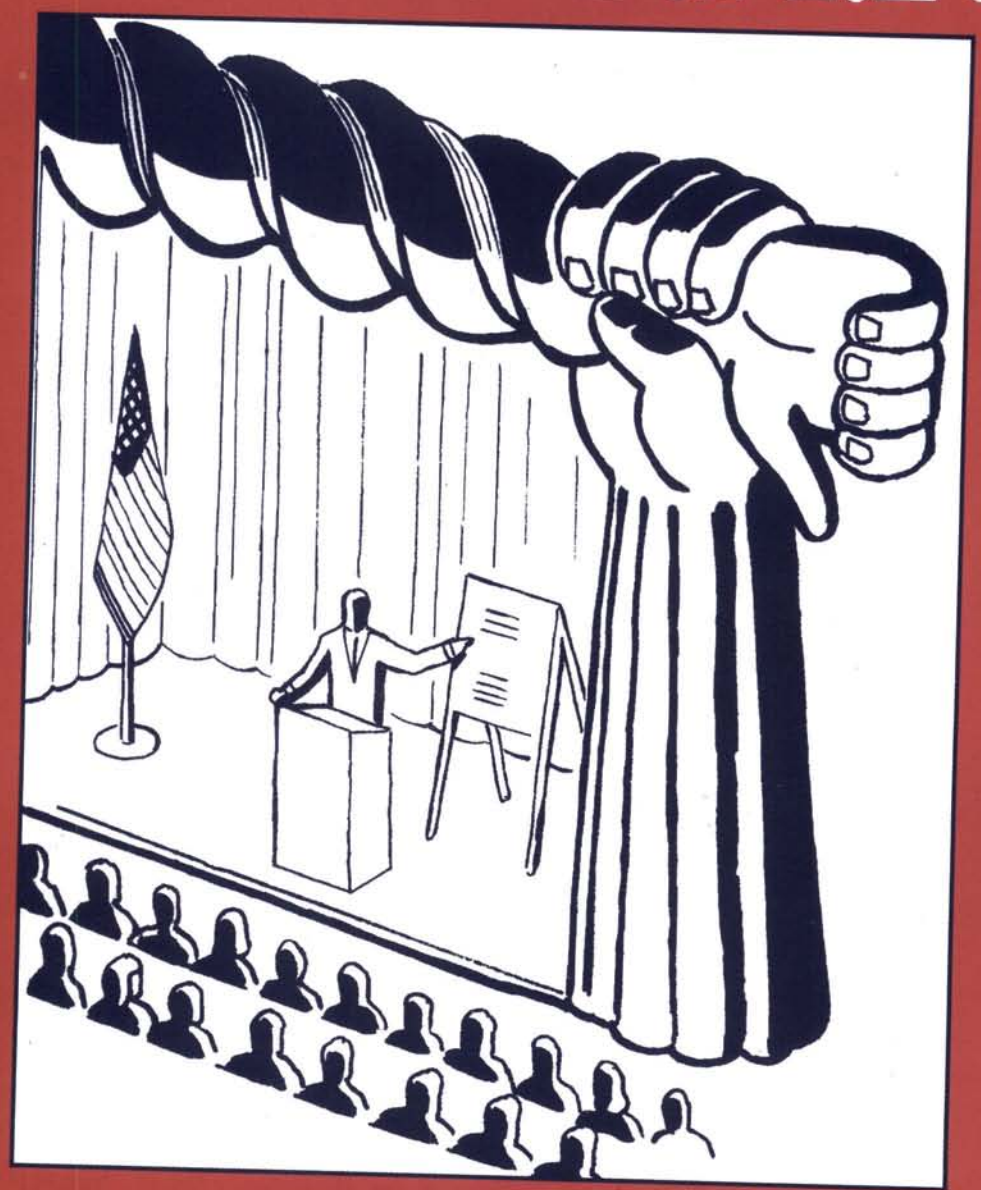
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Be My Valentine: How the GOP Came to Love the Clinton Budget

Don't You D.A.R.E.



America's Top Drug Prevention Program Doesn't Work. We'd Better Not Say So.

BY STEPHEN GLASS

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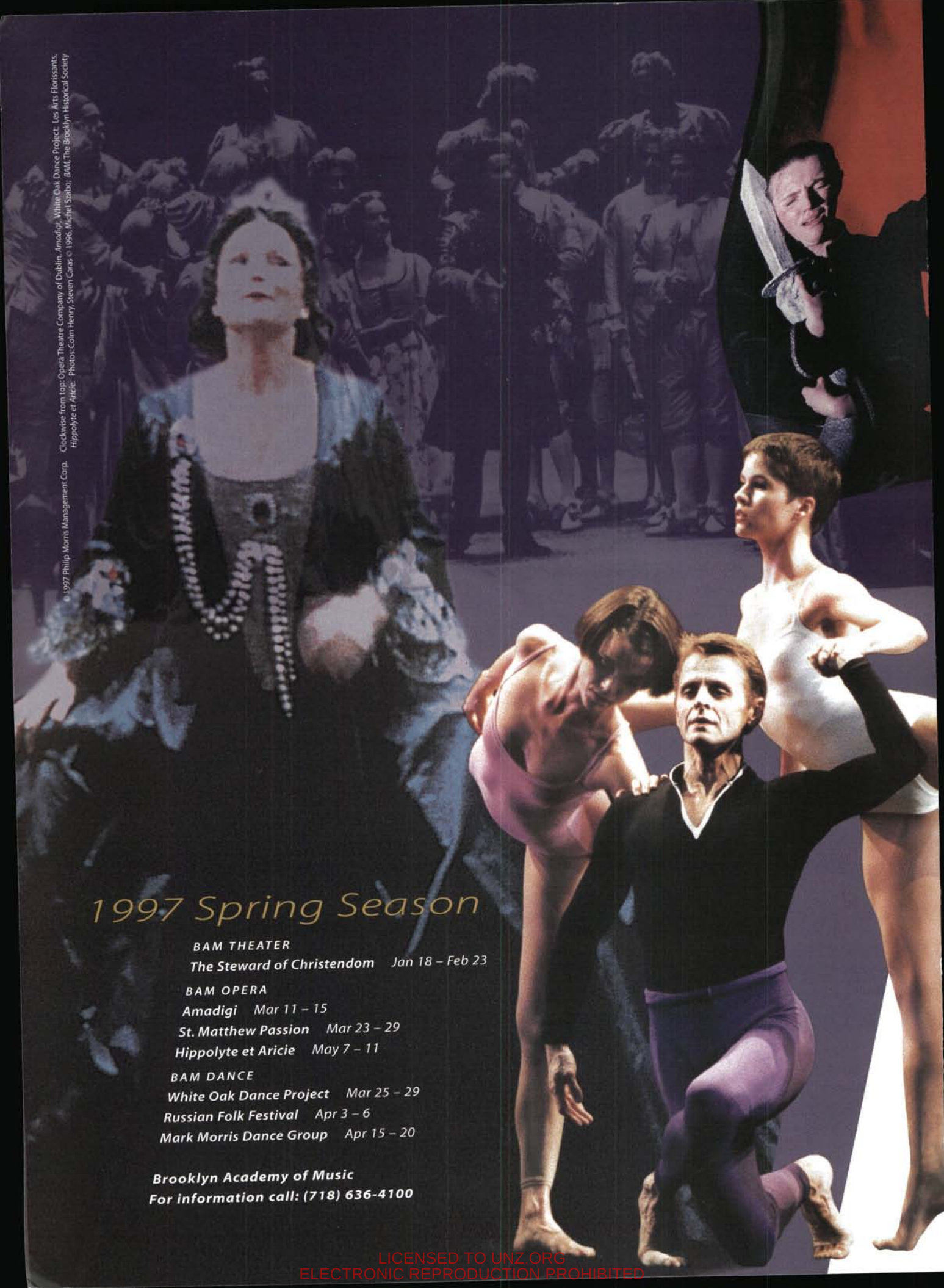

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Clockwise from top: Opera Theatre Company of Dublin, *Amadigi*; White Oak Dance Project; Les Arts Florissants, *Hippolyte et Aricie*. Photos: Colm Henry; Steven Caras © 1996; Michel Szabo; BAM; The Brooklyn Historical Society

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

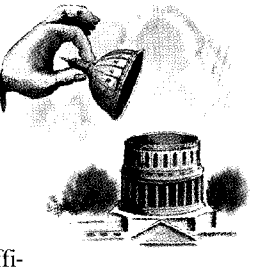
Follow the money

There is a grim hilarity to the way things are going with the Clinton fund-raising scandal. For a while there, with the stories mounting about what the Clinton fund-raising operation got up to in the last election, the president's defenders argued that it was all perfectly legal, if perfectly revolting. There was, you see, no evidence of an actual quid pro quo. As the president put it in a revealing remark, the only thing the donors were guaranteed was "a respectful hearing if they had a concern about the issues." A deeply respectful hearing.

That's finished. Recent stories in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe* and *Newsweek* have kicked the slats out from under even this feeble and cynical defense. The traffic in government favors for cash has now been established well past the degree necessary to warrant a criminal investigation. It's been a fine week for following the money.

The *Journal* reported that Alan Leventhal and Fred Siegel, two Boston businessmen who were personally caffeinated by Clinton in the White House, and who raised $3 million for the president's campaign, were rewarded last fall with a remarkably toothsome deal: their company, Energy Capital Partners, was chosen by Clinton's Department of Housing and Urban Development to serve as the main administrator of a new $200 million loan program. The structure of the program guarantees Energy Capital millions of dollars in profit, while also insulating the company from risk. Not only is the government putting up the money to be loaned, but, unprecedentedly, HUD agreed that, should loans default, Energy Capital will be repaid ahead of the government.

The *Journal* story also established that the Clinton administration violated at least the spirit of the law banning fund-raising within the White House itself, as well as the Hatch Act, which bars government officials from soliciting funds for a political party. The story demonstrated that (a) the president and the vice president personally approved the massive fund-raising operation that was ostensibly run by the Democratic National Committee, (b) Harold Ickes, then deputy chief of staff, supervised the operation through weekly Wednesday meetings in the White House, (c) at least some donors were told explicitly that they could buy their way into White House coffees with the president, where they could pitch him personally on their concerns, (d) many of those who attended these special sessions with the president also contributed large sums of money to the DNC at about the same time and (e) the DNC arranged meetings between donors and government officials to whom the donors had requested access.



Stories in *The Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek* and the *Globe* also provided evidence of quid pro quos directly involving Clinton, as well as then-Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, and also showed that the president and top White House officials were personally involved in soliciting money and funneling it to the DNC, in possible violations of the law. As the *Times* and *Newsweek* reported, Clinton was approached at a Florida fund-raiser two weeks before Election Day by an exporter named R. Warren Meddoff, who handed the president a business card on which he had written: "My associate has $5 million he is prepared to donate to the DNC." Clinton's response was not: "Sir, I am the president of the United States of America. I am not a bagman." It was: "Let me have another one of those cards."

The president then assured Meddoff that a member of the White House staff would call him, and a few days later Ickes called. "The president asked me to handle this matter," Ickes said. Meddoff told Ickes that a Texas speculator named William Morgan wished to give big to the Democrats, but he also wanted to get a tax break for his gift. The law prohibits claiming political contributions as tax-deductible. Ickes's response was not: "Sir, I am the deputy White House chief of staff. I cannot advise you on how to take illegal tax deductions." It was: "We have a way to do this."

Ickes then asked if Morgan could come up with $1.5 million in "the next day or so." The following day, Ickes faxed Meddoff a memo detailing how Morgan could make his political contribution and also claim a tax deduction for it. The memo said "it would be greatly appreciated" if Morgan would wire $500,000 to the bank accounts of several get-out-the-vote organizations, which were supposedly nonpartisan and therefore tax-exempt, but which specialized in the almost monolithically Democratic black vote. Most helpfully, the memo provided Meddoff with the groups' bank account numbers. Ickes also asked Meddoff to wire $500,000 directly to the DNC's bank account, which certainly looks like a clear violation of the Hatch Act.

But what was the quid for Meddoff's quo? Meddoff told the *Globe* that he went to the fund-raiser in Miami and offered Clinton $5 million to persuade the president to lift the ban on aid flights to Cuba. Now, follow the money: Meddoff makes his financial offer to Clinton; then Clinton asks for a second business card and promises to have a staffer call about the money; then Meddoff broaches the subject of the aid flights; then the president tells Meddoff that he had "made the decision to allow the supplies to be flown." And it is a matter of record that the president did lift the ban on flights to Cuba that very day. A coincidence, explains the White House.

In another story that offered evidence of a high Clinton official dispensing favors for cash, the *Globe* last week published the first serious effort to answer the question of whether the late Ron Brown rewarded donors to the DNC with slots on U.S. foreign trade missions. Matching DNC donors with the manifests of the business leaders invited by Brown to fly with him on the sixteen overseas trips that the Commerce Secretary led from 1993 through 1995, the newspaper found that the businessmen invited on the trips gave $15 million to Democratic Party entities over the course of Clinton's first term. In 1995, the year the White House unleashed its money juggernaut, Brown's Commerce Department increased the number of business leaders invited on trade missions about five-fold over the number invited in 1993, going from fifty-four frequent flyers to 264. And, weirdly enough, the amount of money contributed to the DNC by Brown's fellow travelers increased by nearly the same degree, going up four-fold in 1995 over 1993. A coincidence, explains the White House.

The Attorney General says that she has not yet seen sufficient evidence of wrongdoing by the president and top administration officials to trigger the appointment of an independent counsel. Who's she gonna believe, the president or her lying eyes? An independent counsel must be appointed in the matter of the president's fund-raising operation, now.

MICHAEL KELLY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

MARCH 3, 1997

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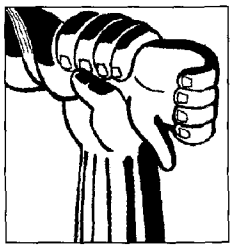
ISSUE 4,285



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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 216, Number 9, Issue 4,285, March 3, 1997. (Printed in the U.S. on February 12, 1997.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 14 & 21, Aug. 11 & 18, and Sept. 8 & 15, 1997) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Save your soul

To the editors:

I must make confession and witness, for I did join the holy Cult of Concord early, yea, nigh unto the very moment of its immaculate conception. I did heed the call of Saint Paul, Saint Warren, and our Holy Father, Pete, to smite the Deficit and to lead the Nation out of the Slough of Debt ("Holy Trinity," by Stephen Glass and "The Great Savings Scare," by John B. Judis, January 27).

Another follower of the Blessed Trinity did tempt me to believe: the Apostle Barbara Jordan, she who wast a woman of great worth, a pearl above price, whose actions spake unto me when she did join the Concord Coalition Board of Disciples, ah, Directors, and did remain within it, yea, even unto death. Who amongst us hath believed her to be a false prophet?

But Glass saith that they are dishonorable, all, that they do seek glory only, and worldly fame, despising humility. Judis saith that I, an acolyte of Concord, hath no eyes to see the error of the Saints, and followeth false gods. Judis saith that the great Congress shalt nurture and cradle us in our retirement, and for this reason we need not store up riches, as doth the Ant, but may rejoice and spend and consume always, as doth the Grasshopper.

Whom shall I seek to believe? Hath the Saints taken money for enrichment? Nay, for Concord payeth them not. Hath the Saints appeared on the Stage of Oprah, or upon that of Letterman, that they might find renown? Nay, they have not done so. Hath they sought the blessings of the Pundits, or of the Parties? Nay, for the Pundits and Parties do despise and dishonor them.

Therefore I shall cleave to the Concord gospel, and accept with joy and laughter the persecution of the Pundits Glass and Judis. I shall go forth unto the Nation, and unto the States, and unto the Congressional Districts, and preach the Word of Concord. But I shall not rename my cats. Get thee behind me, Judis!

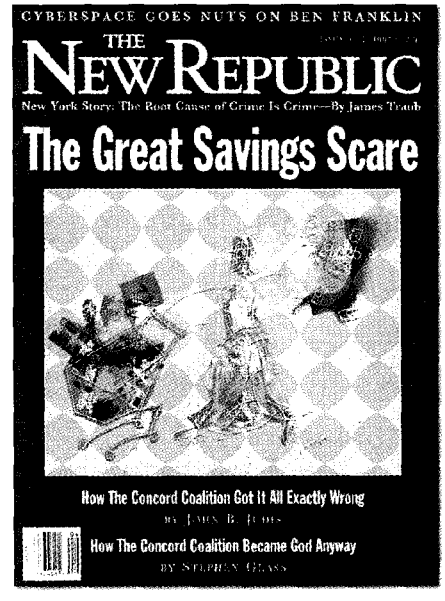
MONICA WYATT
DeKalb, Illinois

To the editors:

TNR would be a less enjoyable magazine if one didn't encounter in it unexpected points of view, even odd ones. But sheer pointlessness?

Stephen Glass informs us that the Concord Coalition enjoys credibility in political and media circles and has recruited large numbers of highly motivated, energetic members. Somehow, we infer from his general tone, Glass disapproves of this and wishes the Coalition's founders and leaders had devoted their time to other activities. Why, he doesn't really say, except by deploring the insufficiently precise economic understanding of an 80-year-old lady in Chicago.

Perhaps John B. Judis's article "The Great Savings Scare" is intended to supply the rationale: at least we know, more or less, where *he* is coming from. There are his recollections of Econ 11, as taught once upon a time, in the heyday of Keynesianism. There are speculative, mutually contradictory statistics, designed to show that nothing is really as bad as it seems, and odd bits of logic: if the trade deficit didn't exist, the savings rate would be higher. Well, yes: if my grandmother


CYBERSPACE GOES NUTS ON BEN FRANKLIN
THE NEW REPUBLIC
The Great Savings Scare
How The Concord Coalition Got It All Exactly Wrong
How The Concord Coalition Became God Anyway

had wheels, she'd be an automobile!

Moral opposition to excessive consumption is "mean-spirited" (that most tedious political insult of the mid-'90s!) because by buying stuff at Wal-Mart mankind seeks "appreciation of art and entertainment and the cultivation of physical and psychic well-being!"

Yes, the deficit declined to a mere $107 billion in 1996. Trouble is, unless we do something, especially about entitlements (and no, it needn't be terribly drastic!), that's as low as it will go. Does it matter? If our federal government over the last three decades, and especially in the 1980s, had not run up a debt of more than $5 trillion, the quarter trillion dollars annually that now goes to pay interest would be available for education, health care, housing and other needed public investments. If we follow Judis's economic advice we will have, in the not-too-distant future, a government unable to do anything but cut checks, increasingly worthless ones, to bond holders and Social Security recipients. And that, dear Stephen Glass, is why Susan worries about the children!

WOLFE W. SCHMOKEL
Morrisville, Vermont

Making it

To the editors:

Jacob Heilbrunn's January 20 "Speech Therapy" article on Ebonics (what most linguists refer to as "African American Vernacular English") contains some grains of fact, but many more mountains of inaccuracy and misrepresentation.

Heilbrunn's contention that "There is no evidence that Ebonics has improved the English of black students" is simply wrong. I myself drew his attention to the 1989 study by Hanni Taylor that contrastive analysis of Ebonics and standard English helped black inner-city university students from Chicago dramatically *reduce* incursions from the former in their standard English writing, while "regular English department techniques" resulted in a slight *increase* in carryovers from their vernacular. I also told him about the 1981 paper by Gary and Charlesetta Simpkins reporting that over 400 seventh- to twelfth-graders who were taught initially with Bridge dialect readers demonstrated almost four times as much progress in four months as those taught by conventional remedial techniques. There is also evidence from experiments in Norway, Sweden, Atlanta and Oakland that approaches which build on children's vernacular competence succeed better than those which do not, even with other relevant factors like school location and facilities held constant.

The suggestions that all who study the linguistic intricacies of Ebonics are Afrocentric "Ebonologists," and that they are opposed to helping children master the linguistic intricacies of "good" English, are also unfounded. My colleagues Peter Sells and Tom Wasow are theoretical syntacticians who co-authored a paper with me on an interesting grammatical feature of African American Vernacular English, but this no more makes them "Ebonologists" than writing this piece makes Heilbrunn one. More to the point, virtually all linguists are agreed on the importance of helping children master the standard varieties—the January 1997 resolution of the Linguistic Society testifies specifically to this, and urges that increased resources be made available for this purpose.

Heilbrunn's report of my discussion of the reduction and loss of "does" (not "be") which precedes the emergence of the invariant "be" as a habitual marker also misses the fact that I was referring to a process I had witnessed firsthand on the South Carolina Sea Islands, where "Gul-

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lah" was and is still spoken. Several other relevant details of the process are misrepresented.

Finally, the trivializing implication throughout the article that "taking Ebonics into account" in the schools represents nothing more than a series of vocal affirmations or call-and-response exchanges is unjustified. There is both substantive theory and successful practice here, and Heilbrunn has unfortunately failed to help his readers see either. That may unfortunately reinforce complacency about existing, status quo methods—methods which continue to "enslave a new generation in the chains of ignorance."

JOHN R. RICKFORD
Stanford, California

Jacob Heilbrunn replies:

The studies Professor Rickford cites do not support the sweeping conclusions he draws. There are no credible studies or programs showing that "Bridge dialects" can be used to improve the English language test scores of black students. The only programs that have been shown to have any efficacy are traditional phonics-based ones like those used in the Houston public school system. As Professor Rickford's reference to Gullah suggests, he and his fellow Ebonologists have simply gone to elaborate lengths to construct an academic superstructure that legitimizes the use of slang in the classroom.

Candy coated

To the editors:

Charles Lane's "Hard Time" (January 27) is both ill-timed and ill-conceived. Lane's jumping-off point leaves very little room to consider the quite obvious and mostly undisputed notion that President Fujimori is feared more than admired by the people of Peru.

As with most mainstream reports on the subject of the hostage takeover in Peru, Lane briefly, and begrudgingly, mentions Fujimori's "self-coup." Having thus "candy coated" that little piece of information, Lane goes on to justify the mockery of due process in Peruvian courts by claiming that harsh and barbaric prison treatment has reduced judge intimidation. I don't know where Lane is from, but his criteria for a legitimate government seem horribly low. Indeed this is the point your publication and many others fail to take into account. Fujimori is not legitimate in the eyes of the people of Peru.

Luckily, all is not lost in his article when he correctly states that Peru is, in fact, an "impoverished democracy." In a recent *New York Times* poll, only 59 percent of those surveyed approved of Fujimori's handling of the crisis, hardly a sign of significant faith in a leader.

BOYD MCCAMISH
Stony Brook, New York

Bad blood

To the editors:

I distinctly remember the grim mood around TNR's offices about three years ago, after Serbian mortars killed sixty-eight civilians in a Sarajevo marketplace. It was late in the production cycle, but the editors pulled the cover to make room for the first words of an excoriation of President Clinton. The outrage still sticks in my mind: "When blood is spilled, it is the responsibility of those who spill it, and the responsibility of those who could have stopped its spilling."

TNR's January 27 Notebook includes an item about a recent issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, in which I wrote about another outrage: Clinton's ban on the use of federal AIDS-prevention money for needle exchanges. Though they make voters queasy (as does putting soldiers on foreign soil), these programs are the best known way to prevent HIV infection in the communities of poor drug users where the virus now wreaks the most damage. The latest estimate is that 10,000 people are HIV-positive today because the administration prefers good politics to saving lives.

In my arrogance, I thought my old colleagues at TNR would appreciate this kind of journalism. Instead, it turns out that my piece was an example of "what happens when wonks think messianically." Apparently, I "mistake earnestness for seriousness" and blithely confuse small issues with large. So let me get this straight. When TNR editors have policy prescriptions that will save lives, they are righteous. When others do, we are self-righteous fools?

JOSHUA WOLF SHENK
Washington, D.C.

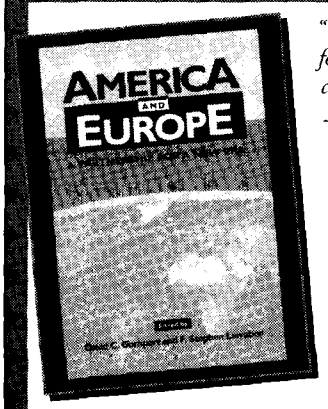
Disinterested

To the editors:

Does TRB's author, Michael Kelly ("Why It Matters II, January 27), really think that foreign businessmen and corporations have only commercial interests in U.S. elections? Many U.S. citizens certainly think they have non-commercial interests at stake in elections in South Africa, Russia and Israel, and would probably take an interest in elections in Iraq and Syria, if they ever happened. Are foreigners so different?

JOHN CAMPBELL
Larchmont, New York

America and Europe
A Partnership for a New Era
David C. Gompert and **F. Stephen Larrabee**, Editors



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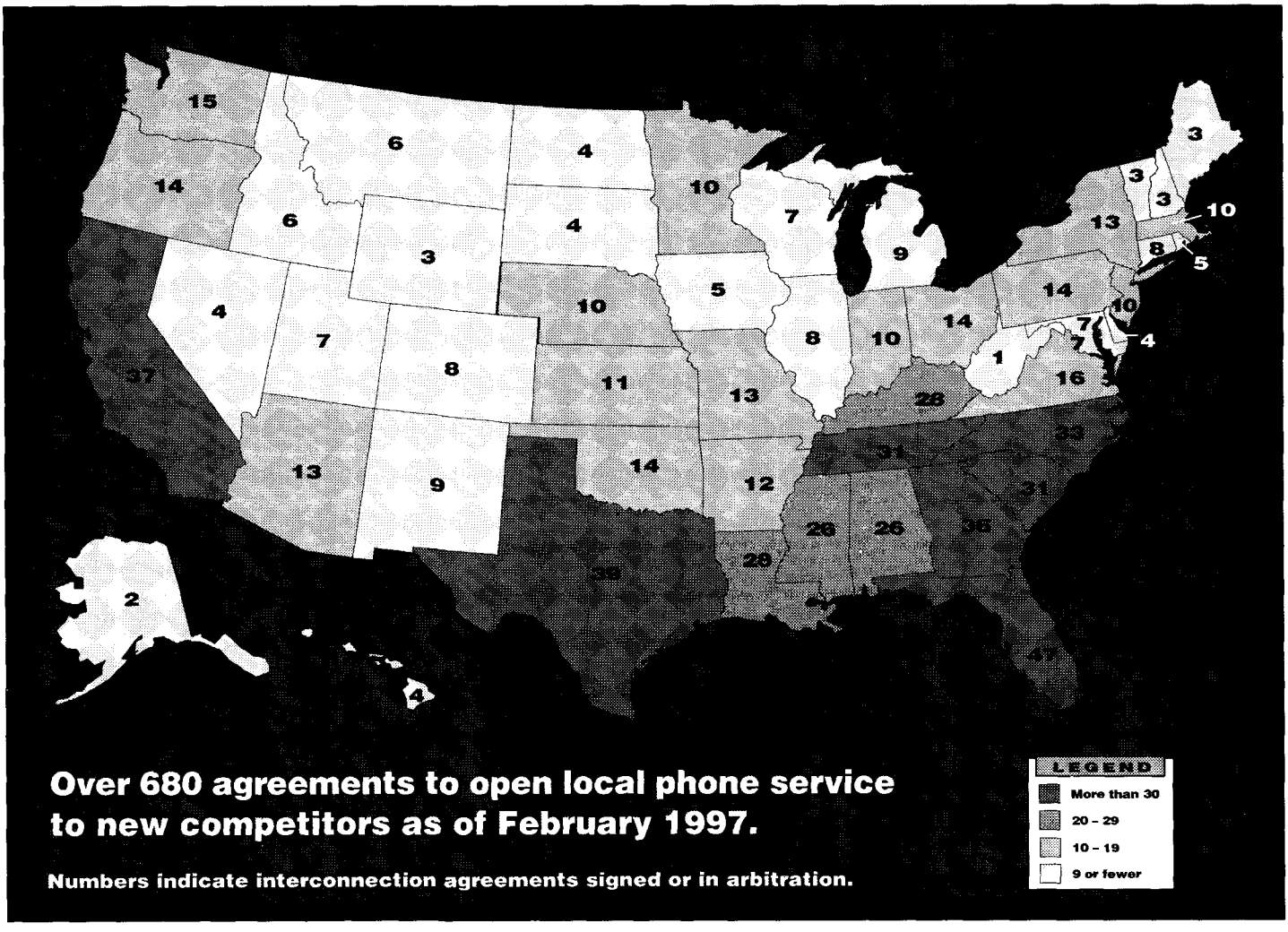

Over 680 agreements to open local phone service to new competitors as of February 1997.

Numbers indicate interconnection agreements signed or in arbitration.

One year since the Telecommunications Act became law, the landscape is already changing. That's because America's local phone companies have been doing their part to turn the Act's promise of new investment and new competition into a reality.

We've already negotiated more than 680 agreements to open local phone service to new competitors. While the *Wall Street Journal* reports that AT&T, MCI and Sprint "are slow to enter local markets."

We've invested another $20 billion to make the best phone network in the world even better. While the *Washington Post* says that MCI has "downplayed the prospects for increased investment in local telephone networks."

We're committed to serving everyone. While AT&T's chairman says its focus will be on "business customers" in "major cities" and MCI's "long-term plans don't include penetrating below the 'top 30 percent' of residential customers at all."

Sure, MCI and AT&T like to talk about being competitive, but they don't put their money where their mouths are. Instead of competing, the big long-distance companies have actually marched in lock-step six times over the past five years to increase their rates. And they've done it even after local phone companies gave them $9 billion in discounts for their use of the local phone networks Americans depend on.

Seems that in the big long-distance companies' approach to telecommunications reform, it's average consumers who aren't on the map.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 3, 1997

THE RETURN OF ROSY

In a budget filled with audacious and dubious claims, the most audacious and dubious claim made by President Clinton last week was that he'd solved our fiscal troubles not just for our time (i.e. the year 2002) but for, in budgetary terms, the ages. "Based on the projections we now have," Clinton said in unveiling his new plan, "we believe we can maintain a balanced budget for more than two decades." Indeed, he added, "that is one of the most important findings of the work that we have been doing." OMB Director Frank Raines, the man whose work produced those findings, sounded smug about the miracle he'd pulled off in his debut. As Raines told anyone who'd have him on a chat show, "the decisions that are in that budget deal with about 80 percent of the long-term problem [of entitlements]."

Far from having ushered in the End of Deficits, however, Raines has instead resurrected the dread Rosy Scenario. It's a pity. Under Leon Panetta and Alice Rivlin, the Clinton administration had gone a long way toward restoring the credibility of the Office of Management and Budget, whose forecasts under presidents Reagan and Bush had been hopelessly upbeat. Over the past four years, as the president and his people never tire of pointing out, OMB's forecasts have been closer to the mark than the Congressional Budget Office's. OMB has in fact routinely overestimated what the actual red ink has turned out to be. That kind of conservatism has been prudent and refreshing, one of the unsung ways in which Clinton has brought renewed integrity to public life.

Well, that was then. Now, unfortunately, the White House seems to have mistaken fiscal credibility (something you earn every day) for political capital (something you spend down when it suits you). In saying that all's well for two decades, the White House aims to bolster its political case that any consideration of Medicare and Social Security's long-term problems can be postponed. "The major point here," Raines told reporters, "is that we have time."

Let's be clear: it's defensible, if not particularly brave, for the administration to say it doesn't want to address major entitlement reform yet, and instead ask another commission to report back with ideas. But to jigger the numbers to define away the very existence of the problem cloaks cowardice with fraud. Though the White House has done its best to hide its long-term forecast from public scrutiny (five pages buried in a budget appendix offer pseudo-details that raise more questions than they answer), two examples suggest how shameless Rosy's new garb really is.

On Medicare, the White House says real per capita growth rates for hospital fees will decline from 4.1 percent today to 1.5 percent by 2020. And it promises that the growth rates for physician payment will drop by half. Exactly why the White House expects such happy results, even in the face of pricey new technologies, remains a mystery. "There is absolutely no policy change associated with the [White House's] magic reduction in Medicare growth rates," says Carol Cox Wait of the bipartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. "It's insane."

But the worst fraud comes in the area of "discretionary" spending, home of the public investments in R & D, education and infrastructure Clinton once pledged to boost. Though domestic spending is only about 15 percent of the budget, Clinton has slated it (education aside) for his biggest cuts between now and 2002. But in his new long-term plan he goes even further. He'd take domestic spending, which has already dropped from 5 percent of GDP in 1980 to 3.8 percent today, down to 2 percent of GDP around 2015. That would pare government back not just to pre-Great Society but to pre-New Deal size, eliminating whole chunks of the FBI, prisons, border control, food inspection, health research, environmental protection, aid to poor schoolkids, even air traffic control. Quite a legacy for Clinton: a vision for America that Dick Armey and Charles Murray can celebrate. For good measure, Clinton would also slash defense spending as a share of national income by two-thirds.

This is the rubbish that Frank Raines touts as an accomplishment. In one sense, it is. It used to be that administrations simply lied about the next few years. As they did so, budget directors like Richard Darman eased their consciences by loading their budgets with explanations of why the long-term problems of the baby-boomers' retirement had to be addressed, and soon.

Now, to justify his boss's fear of unpleasant choices, Raines has inaugurated the long-term hoax, which he's hoping Washington will swallow with a politically knowing wink. "It's bad enough that they didn't belly up to the bar to get us the deficit reduction we needed by 2002," says Robert Reischauer, former director of the Congressional Budget Office. "But to have the chutzpah to claim they're proposing policies that will keep the budget in balance to 2020 [is] particularly galling." Our sentiments exactly. •

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NOTEBOOK

SECOND THOUGHTS: For justice in America, it's been a week of better late than never. Lemrick Nelson, the killer of Yankel Rosenbaum, was found guilty in a federal civil rights trial after having been acquitted in a state criminal trial, and O.J. Simpson was found liable in a state civil trial after having been acquitted in a state criminal trial. Some civil libertarians are worrying about double jeopardy. "It's really a second crack at O.J. Simpson," Yale Kamisar of the University of Michigan complained to *The New York Times*. "The reason most people don't mind is because most people, or most white people, think that O.J. Simpson did it. It's so easy to forget about principles." Kamisar's own principles are a little too fastidious: Simpson's civil retrial, unlike Nelson's federal civil rights retrial, presents *no* serious double jeopardy concerns. As for Nelson: the original purpose of the federal civil rights statutes was to provide a federal remedy for criminal cases in which local prosecutors were unwilling or unable to prosecute public officials; and the use of the Reconstruction-era laws to retry private citizens who have been acquitted of state murder charges does indeed raise the specter of double jeopardy. (See "In Jeopardy," TNR, November 15, 1993.) Are we unhappy about the outcome of the second Nelson trial? Not for a second. Yankel Rosenbaum was murdered because he was a Jew. And the evidence in court established that Nelson violated Rosenbaum's civil rights by inflicting stab wounds on him—stab wounds that in fact killed Rosenbaum. As a matter of law, one can certainly argue that the appropriate remedy for the injustice of the original acquittals was retrial on state civil charges, rather than federal civil rights charges. (Of course, Nelson's denim pockets are less deep than the gabardine pockets of the tortfeasor of Brentwood.) But as a matter of morality, the Nelson verdict is preferable to the Simpson verdict. Causing the loss of life should be punished at least by a loss of liberty. Simpson is getting off with a loss of solvency.

KILLING US SOFTLY: American liberals are always protesting that they are tough or toughening. The paleo-liberals say that they are tough, the neo-liberals say that they are toughening. But there is another kind of liberalism, the sort that is forever flabby, that couldn't make a hard political or philosophical decision if its life (or, as is usually the case, somebody else's life) depended on it. Call this oleo-liberalism. And the oleo-liberal of the hour is Frank Rich. First there was his dithyramb to *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, "the most timely and patriotic movie of the year." If Rich really believes that this is a "true-life story," he might have a look at this week's *Weekly Standard*, which has unearthed tape-recorded evidence of what you might call the dark side of Larry Flynt. (It details his revolting erotic misadventures—excuse us, his pursuit of happiness—with his 13-year-old daughter.) Rich thinks that Milos Forman's movie, which wouldn't risk its own rating to show what it championed its hero for showing, was an act of courage, and he cites approvingly the *mitteleuropäische*-macho view of its director that all that stands between democracy and totalitarianism are tits and ass; but then this is what passes for courage in the entertainment industry, and Rich often mistakes the entertainment industry for life. Next there was Rich's column on Ebonics. He is not pro-Ebonics, of course. He is anti-anti-Ebonics. He believes that "the fuss [is] disproportionate." We should instead decry illiteracy in the inner city. Never mind that decrying Ebonics *is* a way of decrying illiteracy in the inner city. Rich thinks that Ebonics is confined "to a single American school board." This is false. Ebonics is a linguistic theory and a pedagogic practice that broaches the most frightening development in contemporary America: the growing prestige of separatism in African American culture, which is owed in part (but only in part) to the separation from American opportunity that many African Americans experience. Would Rich allow a vivacious nonstandard version of English spoken by Jews to interfere with the life prospects of his own children? We suspect that he would make a disproportionate fuss. But oleo-liberals often have a recreational use for the authenticity of blacks, or what they imagine it to be. And then there was Rich's column about the disputation between August Wilson and Robert Brustein at Town Hall. Here we should declare an interest: Brustein is our theater critic, and a slightly revised version of his Town Hall speech appears on page 31. But here Rich should declare an interest, too: he is involved in a long-running feud with Brustein, and this may help to explain his inability to write an unambiguous account of what he heard August Wilson say. For Wilson spoke in an idiom that can only be described as fascist. He praised the blood in his veins, for it is the blood of his mother, in whose blood flowed the blood of slaves. He pronounced that blacks cannot play whites and whites cannot play blacks and men cannot play women and women cannot play men, and whereas men can write about women, whites cannot write about blacks, since race is deeper than sex. He preached the coarsest tribalism. Rich declared that Brustein "won on most points," but only "on the surface." What Rich saw in Town Hall was "two humorless and often petty egomaniacs intransigently reiterat[ing] their familiar positions," as if the whole business is a bore and there is no need to make a choice between integration and segregation, between color-blindness and the cult of color. He alluded to Brustein's reference to "universal truth" so as to mock it. And in the middle of this debate about the first principles of American existence, Rich scolded the debaters for neglecting the crisis posed by *Cats*. Where is the theater of yesteryear? So this is the oleo-liberal on the burning issues of the day: he is anti-anti-Ebonics and anti-anti-racialism, but he is not anti-*Auntie Mame*. •

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The president's dangerous company.

IN THE LINE OF JAVA

By Roger Simon

Remember the Clint Eastwood movie *In the Line of Fire*? The plot turned on a simple question: Could the Secret Service agent played by Eastwood stop an assassin from killing the president? The twist was that the would-be assassin was able to get near enough to the president to shoot at him by posing as a donor and buying a ticket to a fund-raiser. There was a nice irony to the idea: the bad guy was able to sidestep all the Secret Service's elaborate efforts to protect the president by taking advantage of the president's greed. What we now know, after several weeks of news reports detailing just who was invited to Bill Clinton's coffee klatches, is that *this is exactly the way it works in real life.*

The United States Secret Service has 2,060 agents and an annual budget in excess of half a billion dollars. Its highest priority is the protection of President Clinton (code named "Eagle"). Clinton rides in an armored limousine (code named "Stagecoach") that can travel at high speeds on steel rims, should its tires be shot out. To throw off snipers, an identical "dummy" limousine will sometimes change places with the president's limousine as it goes through a tunnel. At some speech locations, large bulletproof glass panels are set up on each side of the armored presidential lectern, known as the "Blue Goose." And in particularly risky crowd situations, agents will hold portable Kevlar panels around the president's body. Agents equipped with night-vision goggles and rifles with telescopic sights are positioned atop the White House. Crash barriers, fences, motion detectors, iron gates with anti-ram devices and video cameras guard the White House perimeter, one side of which fronts on a street Clinton closed to traffic for security reasons. Inside the White House itself, Secret Service agents armed with 9 mm Sig Sauer pistols stand outside the Oval Office whenever the president is there.

The point of all of this is to ensure that nobody who is a potential threat gets close to the body of the president. Unless, as it turns out, that person contributes a large sum of money to the Democratic National Committee, in which case he can waltz right in and sit down with Clinton for forty-five minutes or so.

We know this to be true because Eric Wynn did it on December 21, 1995. Wynn attended a coffee in the White House Map Room, which attracted a star-studded cast including Erskine Bowles, then deputy chief and now chief of staff at the White House; Democratic National Committee co-chairs Christopher Dodd and Donald L. Fowler; Thomas "Mack" McLarty, counselor to the president; Craig Smith, the deputy campaign manager of Clinton/Gore '96; and three DNC officials: finance chairman Marvin Rosen, treasurer R. Scott Pastrick and finance director Richard Sullivan. And, of course, Bill Clinton.

Wynn's credentials are somewhat less stratospheric: according to *The Washington Post*, he was sentenced to three years in the slammer after a 1989 guilty plea for theft and tax evasion. He reportedly is an associate of the Mafia's Bonanno family, one of the so-called Five Families who control organized crime in America. And, *The New York Times* reports, just five months before sitting down with Clinton, Wynn was convicted on thirteen counts of conspiracy, securities fraud and wire fraud, and was sentenced to fifty-two months in prison. At the time he was sipping java with the leader of the free world, Wynn was out on bail. According to a close associate, Wynn is trying to obtain a pardon. Two days before his audience with Clinton, a Florida firm that Wynn reportedly has partial control of donated $25,000 to the DNC.

Wynn is only one of a remarkable list of thugs, hoodlums and lowlifes who have been able to chat up the president. There was Roger Tamraz, a fugitive who had coffee with Clinton in April 1996, his U.S.-based oil company having given $72,000 to the DNC in 1995 and 1996. A businessman from Lebanon, the *Post* reported that Tamraz has been sought for eight years on an Interpol arrest warrant for embezzlement. There was a piece of work named Jorge Cabrera, who, according to the *Post*, did time in 1983 for conspiracy to bribe a grand jury witness, and again in 1988 for tax evasion, both convictions related to narcotics trafficking. Cabrera, a Miami resident, attended a December 1995 Christmas party at the White House. And why shouldn't he? A month before, he had donated $20,000 to the DNC. In 1996, Cabrera was sent to prison to serve a nineteen-year sentence for transporting 6,000 pounds of cocaine into this country.

And there was Wang Jun. Wang had coffee with Clinton in February 1996. He is a Chinese arms dealer whose company was the focus of a federal investigation that snagged $4 million in semiautomatic weapons bound for American street gangs.

Still, Wynn tops the list. *The New York Times* ran a Nexis search on him, and found this in a 1989 issue of *Forbes* magazine: "Federal documents say Bonanno family capo Frank Coppa, his associate Eric Wynn and other friends paid a visit" to a stock promoter and "bashed him on the side of the head with a telephone."

Why is this significant? Because while we can assume that Wynn had to pass through a metal detector before entering the White House, it now appears that Wynn knows how to use *common household objects* as bludgeons. Forget about whether this man should be allowed to influence the president of the United States. Should this man be allowed in a small room with the president of the United States?

ROGER SIMON is a nationally syndicated columnist.

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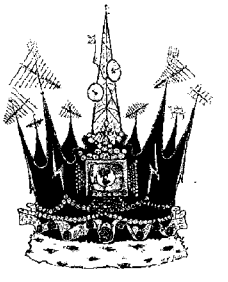
FAMILY NEWS VALUES

By William Powers

Readers of *The Wall Street Journal* might be forgiven for not noticing a curious little sentence that ran in the paper's business and finance digest on February 4: "Dow Jones's controlling family issued a statement of unanimous support for maintaining the company's independence, after reports of pressure from some Dow Jones stockholders both inside the family and out. (Article on Page B6)."

Page B6 offered precious little illumination, but that's no surprise. After all, Dow Jones & Co. owns *The Wall Street Journal*, and any time a news organization is reporting on the people who control it, the prose suddenly goes opaque. So let's begin by translating that odd digest item into standard, non-obfuscatory English. What it really said was: "Attention, reader: The newspaper you are now reading may be sold at any moment to the highest bidder."



For the first time in years, one of the great family controlled American papers—an endangered species that is now down to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times* and the *Journal*—is "in play," at least speculatively. As reported by Joseph Nocera in the February 3 issue of *Fortune* magazine, a few members of the Bancroft family, which controls Dow Jones, have recently become displeased with the performance of their inheritance, and have started pushing for change. It seems these heirs were awakened to the fact that, while *The Wall Street Journal* has been covering the longest bull market in history, its parent company has been showing lackluster profits.

The central problem, according to critics of the current management, is Dow Jones's huge investment in a financial-information service called Telerate, which has been doing poorly against such competitors as Bloomberg. There are suggestions, in Nocera's article and elsewhere, that the Dow Jones tradition of letting journalists run the business side of the company may be partially responsible for the problem. This is a tricky issue. Having smart journalists at the helm of Dow Jones has certainly been crucial to the company's journalistic successes, which also include the Dow Jones News Service and *Smart Money*, the most dynamic and readable of the personal-finance magazines (published jointly by Dow Jones and the Hearst Corporation). But the non-journalistic endeavors haven't worked out so well. Or, as one Dow Jones stockholder bluntly put it to me, "They do the print stuff really well. Everything else is a disaster."

What would be a real disaster is if the wrong people took control of Dow Jones and thereby the *Journal*. Wall Street's paper of record is one of the most robust, elegant, finely tuned exemplars of that gloriously non-digital medium, the newspaper. Among modern newspapers, it has few peers. Its news pages are packed every day with first-rate reporting, and editing so smart and smooth that it verges on art. And the conservative radicals of the *Journal*'s editorial page produce, ideology aside, a model of opinionated writing and editing. Would that papers of other political persuasions had such strong writing; we might actually have an intelligent debate.

The idea of someone taking over this jewel of the information culture, and possibly mucking it up, is enough to raise a minor sweat. So the amazing thing is that more notice hasn't been taken. There have been scattered headlines—particularly in *The New York Post*, which has started a "Keeping Up With The Dow Joneses" feature. The other big-league papers have, for the most part, discreetly averted their gaze.

But since the news broke, various interested parties have been buying up blocks of Dow Jones stock. In a sidebar to his article, Nocera impishly speculated, "just for fun," about who might want to buy enough stock to own Dow Jones, and came up with the name Bill Gates (who could fund the purchase with his pocket change). I'm not about to read Gates's mind, but it seems to be an acquiring mind, and an acquiring mind might want to know what it feels like to own one's own newspaper.

Despite Nocera's tease, though, a takeover by Gates, or anyone else, is unlikely to happen tomorrow. The ownership of Dow Jones is structured like that of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, with the company's heirs owning special "Class B" shares of stock that carry much more voting weight than the common stock, and allow the family to run the show. In short, the Bancrofts can't be bought out against their will, and they insist they aren't going anywhere.

Other powerful newspaper families—the Binghams of *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, the Fairfaxes of Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald*—have said similar things, only to have their empires destroyed by infighting. Let's hope that doesn't happen again. It may seem a strange notion to cheer on the hereditary ownership of a major organ of the American press, but there are good reasons to do so. Unlike ownership by a large, homogenizing conglomerate of the Time-Warner variety, family ownership allows room for risky eccentricity, and for difference. *The Washington Post* is an entirely different sort of newspaper from *The Wall Street Journal*, because over the years each has been given room and freedom to develop its own personality, by a family that understood that journalism is more

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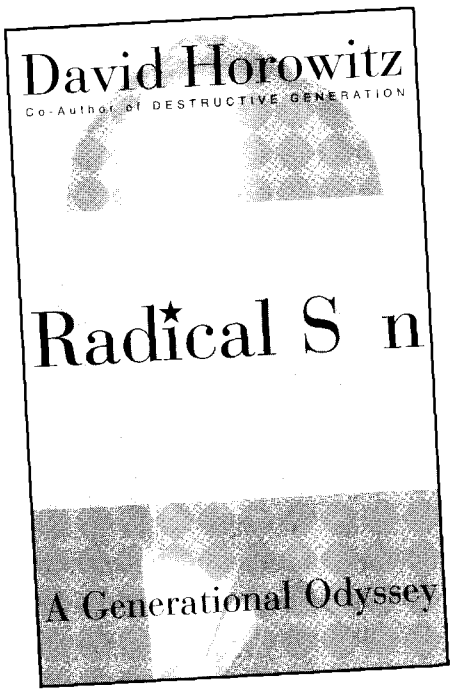
The First Great American Autobiography of This Generation.

—George Gilder, *Author of Wealth and Poverty*



"*Radical Son* is one of the best political memoirs I've ever read.

Though it is really a love story—one man becomes passionately enamored of freedom, responsibility, and reason. Or maybe it's a book about faith healing, a true account of how belief in human dignity and individual rights cures blindness, folly, and hatred. Anyway, everyone who was ever involved with or influenced by the New Left should read David Horowitz's words, and then eat their own. I think the last political book that affected me this strongly was Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*."

—P. J. O'Rourke

"The most remarkable testament of its kind since Whittaker Chambers' *Witness*. A riveting work of literary distinction from first page to last."

—Mark Falcoff, *Public Interest*

"Powerful. Hard to put down."

—Eric Breindel, *New York Post*

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David Horowitz is the bestselling co-author of *The Rockefellers* and *The Kennedys*, president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, and co-editor of *Heterodoxy*.

Published by The Free Press, *Radical Son* is available at local bookstores everywhere; or call 800-752-6562 to order copies.

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than mass marketing. The eccentricities of *The Wall Street Journal*—especially the unique, utterly separate strengths of its news and editorial divisions—are its greatest asset.

Most of those who are now buying Dow Jones stock are probably just in it for the short-term profit. There are undoubtedly other parties, perhaps not current stock owners, who would like nothing more than to mute the tough journalism of the *Journal*'s news pages, which has offended many a corporate panjandrum. And still others who would gladly silence the editorial writers for ideological crimes against the state. Any of these routes would be bad news for the culture at large. Each of our remaining great newspapers is a freestanding utility serving a different public, under the stewardship of private individuals who, by accidents of birth, marriage and luck, are invested with a huge responsibility. If Dow Jones is to be sold, the best outcome would be for it to wind up in the hands of people who know where the company's real value is. At the crux of the current turmoil, beyond even the matter of money, is the matter of great journalism. The *Journal*'s devoted readers know this. But then nobody asked what *we* think. •

ON THE HILL

LOOSE JUICE

By Jonathan Weisman

Long ago, the monolithic Phone Company fell to the forces of deregulation. The Electric Company, on the other hand, has remained intact since 1898, when Samuel Insull, Thomas Edison's private secretary, audaciously declared competition in electric markets to be "economically wrong." For phone service, you can choose between companies like MCI and AT&T, but for electricity, you're beholden to the company that operates in your area, and you pay rates set by state regulators, not the market. That will soon change. Already, California, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania have enacted laws to break up the utility monopoly over electric power generation. Six other states are on the verge of doing so. Now, with Congress about to take up the matter, electricity deregulation is set to become the next great lobbying slugfest in Washington, D.C., a struggle over the future of a $208 billion industry that touches the lives of every American with a light switch.

"This is the biggest deregulatory fight Congress could possibly wrestle with," says Jerry Taylor, director of natural resource studies at the Cato Institute. "Of all the others—trucking, telecommunications, airlines—there has been nothing like this."

Deregulation raises a host of important issues: how socially beneficial but costly efforts, like alternative energy development and poverty programs, will survive in a competitive market; whether an era of cost-cutting will jeopardize the reliability of the nation's vital electricity grid; whether increasing demand for cheaper electricity will trigger waves of air pollution from Midwestern coal plants. But despite the immense reach of any measure to deregulate electricity, the only thing that really stands between Congress and deregulation at this point may be a somewhat arcane concept known as "stranded costs."

More a term of art than economics, "stranded cost" refers to the difference between the rates that regulated utilities are allowed to charge their customers in order to turn a profit and the rates a competitive market would bear. The estimates of potential stranded costs are staggering: between $80 billion and $500 billion nationwide. Moody's Investors Services put the figure at $135 billion, $3 billion more than the sum federal taxpayers paid on the savings and loan bailout. Roughly $82.5 billion of those costs stems from facilities—predominantly nuclear—that will not be competitive in a free market. The remaining $52.5 billion comes from long-term contracts that utilities signed with alternative energy producers to comply with federal and state mandates. The power purchased under those agreements will also be too expensive to sell in a competitive market.

Unlike the S&L bailout, stranded cost recovery would not appear as a fat line item in the federal budget. Most likely, the necessary funds would be raised through a mandatory "transition" charge that customers would find on their electricity bills, whether they stuck with their utility or not.

Still, the S&L analogy holds. Like the S&Ls, the utilities believe they should be reimbursed for any investment they made, even if they lost their shirts. Their argument goes something like this: we submitted to state and federal regulators; promised to serve all customers in our region, including the indigent; renounced massive profits; and made costly investments in conservation and alternative energy. In return, we were guaranteed that all our costs would be reimbursed from rates set by public utility commissions. Utility executives contend every investment they made was approved by government regulators; therefore, governments need to share responsibility.

At stake in the S&L crisis was the savings of little old ladies; at stake in the utilities' cases is the little old ladies' retirements. The safe but plodding returns on utility stocks have made them prime retirement vehicles for the most cautious of investors. Southern California Edison raised "an army of blue hairs," as one lobbyist put it, to help fight for stranded cost recovery when the California legislature addressed the issue. Indeed, independent analysts at the federal Energy Information Administration predict

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competition with no financial compensation for the utilities could send many of them into bankruptcy, pushing share prices into free fall. As John Rowe, chief executive of the New England Electric System, puts it, "Any utility in the Northeast that isn't deeply concerned is smoking a bad weed."

An odd alliance of hard-line environmentalists, large industrial electricity users and deregulatory true believers are decidedly unsympathetic to the utilities' plaints. They see the long-standing arrangement between the government and the utilities as a scheme concocted to thwart competition or shake down the rate payers. House Republican Whip Tom DeLay's deregulation bill would ram through competition by 1998, forbidding utilities from reaping a penny to help them along. For environmentalists, meanwhile, stiffing the utilities on their uncompetitive investments has the attraction of possibly ending, at last, what marches and sit-ins could not: nuclear power. With no transitional handouts, the utilities would have to shut down and decommission their high-priced nuclear plants fast, then buy replacement power from plants that are cheaper and cleaner.

On the other hand, if a stranded cost settlement is lucrative enough, the utilities could keep their reactors running for years, hoping for another energy crisis or technological miracle to make them competitive. And the utilities are not going down without a fight. Edison Electric Institute, their lobbying arm in Washington, got $3 million from its members in 1996 to lobby for the kind of deregulation it wants, one with a federal safeguard ensuring that states cover the utilities' losses. Utility political action committees primed the 1996 campaigns with nearly $3.5 million.

At the state level, thus far, stranded costs have proven to be a multi-billion dollar bargaining chip. In California, the utilities wouldn't allow deregulation until they were promised reimbursement for stranded costs. Environmentalists and consumer groups, in turn, extracted special protections from the utilities for renewable energy, low-income residents and energy efficiency programs. For the next five years, as much as 30 percent of every California electric bill will go to the utilities as an unavoidable stranded cost payment.

Utility executives could live with a California compromise writ national. But it won't be easy to pull off. What they fear most is that a politician will latch on to the stranded cost issue, label it corporate welfare and ride it for all it's worth.

That just might happen. Tom DeLay is a busy man these days, preparing for a second Congress with a Republican majority. Recently, he stormed out of a meeting on Capitol Hill, lunging for a "Members Only" elevator. But he froze in his tracks when he was asked whether he would be willing to buy off the utilities to get fast action on electricity competition. He looked up, smirked, then declared: "I don't know what 'buying off' means. It's not in my vocabulary."

JONATHAN WEISMAN is the energy writer at *Congressional Quarterly*.

Kiss kiss budget bang.

LOVEY-DOVEY

By Jonathan Chait

When President Clinton unveiled his first budget in 1993, conservatives reacted with something approaching hysteria. *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page savaged the plan in a series of editorials called "The Class-Warfare Economy," accompanied daily by a menacing graphic of a guillotine. *Forbes* advised its readers to invest their assets overseas. Republicans, deriding the budget as "the largest tax increase in history," provided not a single vote in either chamber of Congress.

Two years later, after the GOP took Congress, the budget was still occasioning bloody partisan strife. Democrats attacked the Republican budget—Clinton's blueprint was an afterthought—for cutting Medicare in order to pay for a tax cut aimed at the wealthy. Clinton's veto and the resulting collision ultimately defined the end of the Republican Revolution.

But as this year's budget takes shape, the partisan warfare of the past is but an unpleasant memory. At least for the moment, Washington has so totally embraced cooperation that if a politician were to accuse the other party of, say, robbing the middle class, it would sound weirdly anachronistic, as if Helmut Kohl suddenly demanded that France relinquish Alsace-Lorraine. When Clinton unveiled his new budget, the Republican revolutionaries of the House of Representatives burbled with goodwill. "I think on far more fronts [Clinton] is with us than he is against us," Newt Gingrich told reporters. Bill Archer, the ultraconservative chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, called the budget "a very positive and very significant development." His spokesman—a position that usually entails plying reporters with insults hurled against the other side while the boss plays good cop—faxed out an exquisitely non-judgmental analysis of Clinton's budget listing "the areas we find object ... well, not objectionable, but those that stand out." On February 11, in the climax to this embrace, the Republican leadership invited the Democratic president to visit them on Capitol Hill for a chat on the budget and other pleasant matters, and the president went, and afterwards everyone said everything had gone simply swimmingly. But the most telling sign of congressional contentment is that Congress has not even bothered to formulate its own budget. The Republicans decided to use Clinton's as the basis for negotiations. By all indications, the two sides have already reached an understanding well before the official dealing begins.

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Why the sudden outbreak of niceness? The origin of the great budgetary love-in of 1997 most likely began with a White House meeting between Clinton and Archer on December 27. Neither party discussed the meeting publicly, but word of it leaked and was reported by the columnist Robert Novak. The deal clincher: Clinton apparently agreed to cut the tax rate on capital gains, a condition the GOP leadership considers essential for any budget pact. And, sure enough, in the following weeks Clinton began to float his new stance in the media. He declared himself "flexible on capital gains," adding that "I've never been philosophically opposed, as some of my fellow Democrats are."

Clinton had found the key to the chairman's heart. Archer's essential belief is that the top slice of the economic stratum creates all wealth, and therefore should be nurtured by government. And he isn't shy about this. Two years ago he single-handedly fought off an effort by party deficit hawks to close tax loopholes that benefit the affluent. Archer's explanation was that, "The engine that pulls the train must continue to be fueled." This is not the worldview of Adam Smith. It's the worldview of the European nobility that gave way to Smith.

Cutting the capital gains tax is Archer's holy grail, the one-step solution to fueling the engine of the rich. Because the government wants to encourage people to invest in capital, the capital gains tax is already lower, at 28 percent, than the top tax on other forms of income. Archer and other Republicans want to cut it even further, to 19.8 percent. Expanding the capital gains subsidy is tough to square with the laissez-faire ideology Republicans profess to hold dear—why should the government, rather than markets, dictate investments? It's even harder to square with recent experience. In the last two years the stock market has shot up more than 50 percent. The Wall Street boom, while swelling the ranks of stock owners and hence the appeal of a capital gains tax cut, undermines the argument that investors need special tax incentives to put their savings in stocks. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has even warned that "irrational exuberance" has sparked overinvestment in the market. If he's right, then it would make more sense to *raise* the capital gains tax. But Archer, according to his press secretary, "views his job as protecting job makers, risk takers and investors." He represents the GOP fervor for tax cutting in its most naked, unhypocritical form. He is the Republican id.

None of this, however, explains Clinton's behavior. His position is that, while a capital gains tax cut does nothing to spur the economy, it's okay as long as you offset the lost revenue. But cutting the tax distorts the tax code, forces greater spending cuts than would otherwise be necessary to balance the budget and exacerbates inequality. If, like Clinton, you accept that these costs are not offset by any rising economic tide prompted by the tax cut, then you must conclude that cutting the capital gains tax is a bad idea.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Assume nevertheless that Clinton really is neutral on the issue. Openly professing his indifference could only reduce his leverage in budget negotiations. Here is an issue of immense consequence to Congress, and therefore Clinton's most valuable bargaining chip. The more convincing his philosophical opposition, the greater the price he can demand for giving in. Even if Clinton secretly desires a capital gains tax cut, he would be smart to proclaim opposition in order to win concessions elsewhere. Thus only two possibilities could explain Clinton's curious disinterest: either he is an extraordinarily poor negotiator, or he has already cut a deal.

The first possibility is remote; the president dealt shrewdly with Republicans the last time around. So why would he find such easy harmony with the crude economic plutocracy of a Bill Archer? Perhaps freedom from the prospect of re-election has liberated Clinton, but not in the way most Democrats hoped. Budget wars past were fundamentally about political parties protecting their own constituencies. In 1993, a Democratic budget took from the rich and gave to the poor. Two years later a Republican budget did the opposite. Clinton wants to reach a budget agreement that can lay the groundwork for a centrist Democratic dynasty. That means using tax credits and other goodies to lure new Democratic constituents. They look a lot like Bill Archer's constituents. •

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

What Melony Learned

With his State of the Union speech, President Clinton demonstrated that he is indeed the education president. The American public has been demanding higher academic standards. They are right, and, with the President's leadership, we are now far closer to reaching that goal.

In laying out his national crusade for education standards, the President brought up a question that people often ask: Is it fair to raise standards when some youngsters are so much better prepared to meet them than others? Most people have no problem with demanding more of students who go to schools that have adequate resources and where achievement levels are already high. But what about youngsters who go to schools where there may be no decent library or science lab or even enough textbooks to go around—and where achievement levels are often in the cellar? Isn't pushing these kids to meet higher standards just adding one more burden to their lives?

President Clinton asked, "Is it fair to raise standards?"

President Clinton's answer was a good one—"Raising standards will not be easy, and some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. The point is not to put our children down but to lift them up. Good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need help." As President Clinton says, setting standards will help us help these children. It is the lack of common, high standards for all our students that is cruel and unfair and that perpetuates the inequities in our education system.

The truth of this proposition comes alive in "School System Shock," a terrific essay by an African-American student, which appeared in the school reform newspaper *Rethinking Schools* (Winter 1996/1997). Melony Swasey, the author of the article, says she had always been confident that she was doing well in her inner-city school. She was in honors classes all through high school and had a good grade-point average—in fact, she was one of the top ten in her class—and she had no doubt that she was headed for success in a good college. But when she transferred for a year to a suburban high school, she found herself in a totally different league—one she hadn't even known existed:

> The classes I have as honors at Kennedy [her old school] are considered only regular college prep classes in other schools. I realized that those of us who are top-notch at Kennedy might be cut down to an average level in more competitive high schools—schools that have higher standards of education....

When Melony returned to her old inner-city school, she saw it with new eyes. She saw the "inadequate library and obsolete books in the classrooms," and she saw that academic standards were often flimsy: "Many of the clubs and classes...bear respectable names or titles, but don't carry the weight or the full challenge that they should." Perhaps most devastating, she saw the low expectations of the adults in the school—which the students came to share:

> Inner-city students aren't even expected to excel. We are sometimes granted honors for completing only part of a task, while students in more affluent areas are expected to do more to get the same recognition. We are pitied by outsiders who sometimes try to "help" by giving us undeserved praise. Thus, we often don't expect much more of our own selves.

Melony is no whiner and she is not assessing blame—or giving up—but she does have a clear eye. She understands the devastating effects of a system that stacks the cards against some students in some schools. And she worries about her friends who still don't understand the way in which they are being shortchanged. What will happen when they leave Kennedy and discover that they can't compete on an equal footing with kids from suburban high schools?

> I feel for my friends...because most of them are focused on a goal—a goal that is easily attainable for better-prepared students—but never stop to look at their competition. I believe, because of our inadequate preparation, many of us will naively go out as confident soldiers and be knocked down before we even reach the front lines.

Melony concludes that she and her friends have to realize they "are part of an unbalanced society where unequal education is permitted and accepted." But they can't let that realization deflect them from their goals. Her conclusion should shame us all.

There is no doubt how Melony Swasey and her friends would respond to the question about high standards for all. Some schools will need extra resources and extra help, as President Clinton has said, and we have to be prepared to give them. But as for the argument that it is somehow kinder and more humane to expect less of poor kids in low-achieving schools, Melony's essay—and President Clinton's push for national standards—reveals how patronizing and destructive it is.

"School System Shock" first appeared in *Knightlife*, a student newspaper. For a copy of the essay, write to AFT/Shock, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address Mr. Shanker at AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1997 by Albert Shanker. Visit the AFT web site (http://www.aft.org).

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An anti-drug program strong-arms its critics.

DON'T YOU D.A.R.E.

By Stephen Glass

On January 28, 1991, at 4 p.m., 10-year-old Darrin Davis, of Douglasville, Georgia, returned from school to his suburban home. Both of Darrin's parents were at work, and he let himself in. He immediately went to his parents' bedroom to call his mother, who wouldn't be home for another two hours. After talking to her on the phone, Darrin began searching the bedroom for candy; his parents often hid sweets there. He found none. Instead, after climbing on top of a chair, Darrin saw a white powder on a small makeup mirror. At that point, Darrin would later say, he thought of something he had recently been taught in school. Darrin's fourth-grade class had been visited by a police officer under the auspices of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, or DARE, as it is known. One of the things the DARE officer had told Darrin and his classmates was that they should inform the police if they ever saw anyone—including their parents—use drugs. The kids were shown a video that reinforced the point.

Although Darrin had never seen either of his parents use drugs, he decided, based on what he had learned in DARE, that the substance on the mirror was powdered cocaine. So he did what the DARE officer had told him to do: he called 911 and turned in his parents. Two hours later, when the Davises returned home, they were handcuffed and arrested while Darrin watched. A police officer put his hand on Darrin's shoulder, and told the boy he had done "the right thing." Darrin's father spent the next three months in jail, much to Darrin's surprise and dismay. "I thought the police would come get the drugs and tell them that drugs are wrong," the boy told a local reporter. "They never said they would arrest them. It didn't say that in the video." When the sheriff's office told the boy he was too young to visit his dad in jail, Darrin set the neighbors' house on fire, causing $14,000 in damages. "I asked him why he did it," Darrin's mother said. "He said he wanted to be put in jail with his daddy."

As it turned out, the substance on the mirror was not cocaine. The Davises' lawyer says it was a small amount of speed. Both the Davises were charged with simple possession. Ultimately, the Georgia Supreme Court ordered the charges dropped, primarily on the grounds that the police had improperly searched the Davis home. The damage, though, was done. Darrin's telephone call destroyed his family. Heavy media coverage of the 10-year-old who had turned in his own parents ruined the Davises' reputation. Legal fees nearly bankrupted them, and they came close to losing their home. They filed for divorce shortly after the criminal charges were dropped.

In January 1994, James Bovard, a freelance writer, wrote an account of the Davis case for *The Washington Post*'s prestigious Sunday Outlook section. Bovard used the case to criticize DARE for "turning children into informants" in the war on drugs. Although Bovard had called DARE to get the organization's comment, DARE officials had declined to talk more than briefly. Jefferson Morley, an assistant editor at Outlook who handled Bovard's column, edited the piece and faxed the edited copy to Bovard. The piece remained extremely critical of DARE. On the fax, Morley scribbled a note: "Jim: ok?" Bovard called Morley and approved the piece as edited.

On Sunday morning, January 30, Bovard picked up the *Post* and read his story. He was astonished to read, inserted into the piece and under his byline, six paragraphs that he had not written—that, indeed, he had never seen. The paragraphs ran counter to the thrust of the column, calling the case against DARE "murky." Far worse, the new paragraphs said "there was evidence" Darrin's parents were not only drug users, but "were also involved in drug trafficking, thus putting their child at risk." Not only had the possession charges been dropped against the Davises, but there had never been *any* evidence presented to show that the Davises were drug dealers. They had never been charged with trafficking, only with possession.

"I was stunned. I didn't know what to say," Bovard explains. "Nothing like this had ever happened before." Bovard investigated, and what he found out stunned him even more: the incorrect information in the added paragraphs had been directly supplied by DARE.

How did this happen? J.W. Bouldin, the Davises' lawyer, says the *Post*'s lawyers told him that DARE had lobbied the newspaper to add the paragraphs. The *Post*'s lawyers told Bouldin that DARE supplied Morley with the information for the six paragraphs and Morley typed it in. Bovard also says that DARE put pressure on the *Post*. "When they learned more about my story, DARE put on the full-court press," Bovard says. "They wanted to kill this story. It makes sense why."

Morley says it happened slightly differently. He says that after he edited the column he became concerned

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that DARE's point of view was not represented. He consulted with the *Post*'s lawyers, who agreed with him that he should call DARE and get their side of the story. He telephoned DARE's Los Angeles headquarters and talked to a spokeswoman for the organization. Morley says that he wrote the six paragraphs based on his conversation with the spokeswoman. He admits that the information came directly from DARE and that he never told Bovard he had added it to the column. But he says neither he nor anyone at the *Post* "kowtowed" to DARE. "This was my fuck-up. It was not the *Post* caving in to DARE," Morley says. "The whole story doesn't make me look very good. I regret, I really regret, any role in spreading the false information.... This was my least finest hour."

Bouldin knew as soon as he read the column that he had a dandy libel case. He called the *Post*'s lawyers and informed them that he was going to sue on behalf of the Davises. "They soon saw they had one very, very big problem on their hands," Bouldin says. Shortly before the Davises' libel suit was to be filed, the *Post* settled. The settlement included a large cash payment to the Davises. The paper also printed a correction, which cleared the Davises of the drug trafficking accusation and admitted that no evidence connecting them with drug trafficking had ever existed. Bouldin says that the terms of the settlement prohibit him from disclosing just how much the misinformation provided by DARE cost the *Post*, but he makes it clear that the price was high. "Let's just say this was a very expensive mistake for *The Washington Post*," he says, the tone of satisfaction clear in his Southern drawl.

DARE spokesman Ralph Lochridge doesn't deny his organization gave the *Post* false information, and he doesn't apologize, either. "Just because [the Davises] weren't convicted in court doesn't mean they're not guilty of it," Lochridge told me.

The anti-drug and anti-alcohol program called DARE is popular, well-financed and widespread. Started in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department and the L.A. School District, DARE has quickly become the nation's standard anti-drug curriculum. The DARE logo is everywhere: on bumper stickers, duffel bags, Frisbees, even fast-food containers. DARE is the only drug education program specifically sanctioned for funding under the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. This year, the program will receive $750 million, of which some $600 million, according to outside analysts, comes from federal, state and local governments. At the core of the DARE curriculum are seventeen weekly lessons taught in the fifth or sixth grade. The teachers are all uniformed cops trained by DARE. The officers lecture and assign homework on the dangers of drugs, alcohol and gangs. Many schools, like Darrin Davis's, offer a shorter curriculum in every grade before the fifth. Some school districts also participate in supplementary junior high school and high school programs. The Los Angeles-based DARE America, the nonprofit company that develops and sells the DARE curriculum, boasts that cops working with DARE now lecture in 70 percent of the nation's school districts. In 1996, two of the last holdouts, the New York City and Washington, D.C., school districts, signed up for the program.

Most parents know about DARE, and most of them approve of it. So do most politicians, most police officers, most teachers and most journalists. President Clinton has been a fan ever since Chelsea graduated from the Arkansas DARE. "We ought to continue to expand the ... program so that in every grade school in this country there's a DARE officer," he said to cheers at an Orange County campaign rally last October. How many people, after all, are opposed to warning children about the dangers of drugs?

But what most people don't know is that, in the past five years, study after study has shown that DARE does not seem to work. The studies have found that students who go through the program are just as likely to use drugs as those who don't. In fact, the results in one study even show the dreaded boomerang effect: DARE graduates are *more* likely to use marijuana. Behavioral scientists have begun to question, with increasing vigor, whether DARE is little more than a feel-good scheme of enormous proportions. As one researcher put it: "DARE is the world's biggest pet rock. If it makes us feel good to spend the money on nothing, that's okay, but everyone should know DARE does nothing." None of this is a secret among drug policy experts and reporters who cover drug policy; some of the studies have been available for years. *Reason*, *Kansas City Magazine* and *USA Today* have published substantial stories criticizing the program's effectiveness. But these stories have done nothing to impede DARE's progress, and most parents and educators still believe it works. Why isn't the case against DARE better known? Why, at a time when federal funds are scarce, is it not a public issue that a program which costs the government more than half a billion dollars a year may be a waste of the taxpayers' money?

What happened to James Bovard and to *The Washington Post* is an illustration of the answer. For the past five years, DARE has used tactics ranging from bullying journalists to manipulating the facts to mounting campaigns in order to intimidate government officials and stop news organizations, researchers and parents from criticizing the program. DARE supporters have been accused of slashing tires, jamming television transmissions and spray-painting reporters' homes to quiet critics. "What you have to understand is that DARE is almost a billion-dollar industry. If you found out that a food company's foods were rotten, they'd be out of business," says Mount Holyoke sociology and criminology professor Richard Moran. "What's now been found out is that DARE is running the biggest fraud in America. That's why they've gone nuts." DARE has become so well-known for the hardball tactics it employs to shut down its critics that drug researchers and journalists have a word for those hushed—they say they've been "Dared."

Glenn Levant, the executive director of DARE, did not respond to repeated requests for an interview about DARE's effectiveness and its tactics in squelching bad publicity. Provided, at his request, with written questions, Levant did not reply. DARE spokesman Ralph Lochridge says his organization does not silence researchers. "We

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don't go after anyone, and DARE doesn't stop critical stories," he says. "It does try to help journalists write balanced pieces." Lochridge says his organization tries to "work" with journalists. "We don't mind criticism, but we want balance. Is your story going to be balanced?"

The story of DARE and its critics starts in Kokomo, Indiana. Fifty-three miles north of Indianapolis, Kokomo is an auto factory town of 45,000 people in the heart of the state's rural and Republican midsection. The city hall operator boasts that Kokomo was the birthplace of stainless steel. In 1987, it also became the first Indiana city to sign up for the DARE program. That year, school officials invited two sociology professors at the local branch of Indiana University to run an experiment to see how well the program worked. Everyone expected glowing results, and hoped the positive study would accelerate DARE's implementation elsewhere. The research team studied 1987's fifth-grade class in Kokomo through 1994, its last year in high school. They also studied the high school class of 1991, which had made its way through the school system prior to DARE's implementation, and had never been exposed to the program. Sociology professors Earl Wysong and Richard Aniskiewicz measured drug use among the students in both the 1994 graduating class and the 1991 class. They also measured DARE's secondary objectives: boosting self-esteem and reducing susceptibility to peer pressure. Wysong and Aniskiewicz were careful to measure the students' drug use with a multi-part questionnaire, which included DARE's own test as well as tests commonly used by psychologists. They found that the level of drug use among kids who had gone through DARE was virtually identical to the level among kids who had not. This means that in every category of drug use tested—lifetime usage, how recently the students had used drugs, how often they had used drugs and the grade in which they started using drugs—the results were "very similar" for both the DARE alumni and the non-DARE students. So similar, in fact, that the differences were within the margin of error. Moreover, students in both groups rated the availability of drugs nearly identically. In fact, the only statistical difference between the groups was that *more* DARE graduates said they had used marijuana in the past thirty days and the past year than non-DARE alumni. Wysong and Aniskiewicz concluded that "DARE exposure does not produce any long-term prevention efforts on adolescent drug use rates."

What about the more touchy-feely results? Again, the sociologists found no statistical differences. Using questionnaires to examine self-esteem and "locus of control," a common psychology test that measures susceptibility to peer pressure, they found numbers so similar for the two groups that any differences were again within the margin of error. They wrote that self-esteem and peer pressure are "two more areas where we can see no long-term effects resulting from DARE exposure." "That's all, that's it," says Wysong. "It's simple. There was no difference."

But Wysong and Aniskiewicz also found out what other critics of DARE would discover: no one—not parents, not educators and certainly not DARE officials—wanted to hear the bad news. Kokomo's parents, teachers and school board latched on to the study, but Wysong says they missed the point. "I told them the study shows DARE doesn't work," he says, but no one listened. "So what they did was implement drug testing." Since last April, the high school has required every student who leaves the building at lunch, participates in extracurricular activities or drives to school to sign a waiver. The waiver allows the school to pull them out of class at any time and force them to take a drug test. On average, forty-five students are tested each week. "That wasn't what our study recommended," Wysong says. "After our study it became very clear they kept DARE for public relations reasons." The school board has not renewed any studies on the local DARE program.

Even after Wysong and Aniskiewicz published their results, DARE continued to boast that an earlier California study—in fact, the first study ever done on DARE—showed that kids who went through the program accepted drugs less often than kids who had not gone through the program. The data also showed that DARE alumni reported using drugs less often. This study, however, did not ring true to many researchers because it had no pre-test. In other words, students were only surveyed after graduating from DARE. Without measuring drug use before DARE, it's difficult to know whether or not the students' behavior had changed. What is more, the study last examined its subjects as seventh-graders, meaning it never measured DARE's long-term impact. "If you don't know where your base is you really don't know anything," laughs an Ivy League biologist who examined the methodology of the California study. "My kid's science fair project with plants and swinging lights was more rigid than this."

Another drug policy expert who has questioned DARE is Dick Clayton, a widely respected drug abuse researcher at the University of Kentucky. In 1996, Clayton published, in the journal *Preventive Medicine*, the most rigorous long-term study ever performed on DARE. Starting in September 1987, Clayton surveyed schoolchildren in all of the thirty-one elementary schools in Lexington, Kentucky. The schools were randomly assigned to receive the DARE curriculum or to receive "no treatment." Students were tested before going through the DARE program, immediately afterward and again each year through the spring of 1992. Clayton's team found that any results from DARE were extremely short-lived. "Here it is in layman's terms: DARE is supposed to reduce drug use. In the long term, it does not," Clayton says. Just before and after Clayton's release of the two-year data, more studies quietly began popping up with similar results. In total, Clayton wrote in the 1996 book *Intervening with Drug-Involved Youth*, at least fifteen studies were conducted. "Although the results from various studies differ somewhat, all studies are consistent in finding that DARE does not have long-term effects on drug use," he wrote. Among those studies was a 1990 Canadian government report showing DARE was less effective than anyone imagined. The program, the Canadians reported, had no effect on cutting abuse of any drug from aspirin to heroin. (The Canadians were study-

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ing DARE because the program was becoming more popular abroad. Today, Lochridge says, DARE is used in forty-nine foreign countries.)

As the number of debunking studies grew, something else also grew: the number of researchers getting Dared. Take the case of Daniel, a young professor at an Illinois college. He asked that his last name not be used, since he is up for tenure within the next two years and nervous about adverse publicity. Daniel says he wants to study behavioral programs that have political impact. While he suspects that to improve his chances for tenure he should study the behavior of lab animals, he's fascinated by "real world" problems. "That's why Clayton's study appealed to me," he says. "I thought here was a chance where people like me can make a difference." Daniel designed and performed a study of college freshmen. All of the freshmen were in-state students, but only some had attended DARE. Once again, Daniel's study found no meaningful difference in drug use between students who had gone through DARE and students who hadn't. He did find, however, that DARE graduates were slightly *more* likely to drink alcohol regularly for the purpose of getting drunk. Over lunch one day, Daniel, proud of what he thought was an "important finding for the Illinois school system," showed the data to a colleague in a different department. "That was the biggest mistake of my career," Daniel says. "That's right—even bigger than sleeping through an oral exam in graduate school." Daniel says that, within a week, a local DARE official called him at home and asked to see the data. Daniel says he freely showed the information to him. That, he says, resulted in a "big argument with lots of yelling." Two weeks later Daniel says he received a call from his department chairman. The chairman told him that the local DARE official had complained that Daniel was offering kids marijuana as part of his study. Daniel says the allegations are false, but that he immediately stopped work on the DARE study, and returned to lab animals. "That could have been, and still might be, a career killer," Daniel says. "DARE has made it so I will never venture out of the lab again."

While it's not possible to say exactly how many researchers have been Dared, it is clear from talking to academics in the relevant fields that there are a number of them. It's common knowledge among researchers that doing DARE studies can ruin a promising career. Wysong and David W. Wright, a Wichita State University professor, wrote in *Sociological Focus* that the DARE researchers they had interviewed "asked to remain anonymous out of fear of political reprisals and to protect their careers." Interviews with drug researchers support this statement. An author of one prominent paper says he no longer studies DARE. "I needed my life back. I'm in research. My wife and I couldn't take endless personal attacks," he told me. "You want to know why I stopped researching DARE? Write your article and you'll see." Another researcher who was critical of DARE says he became so unpopular among fellow professors he went into the private sector. "If you fight DARE, they make you out to look like you want kids to smoke pot. I thought it was my duty to say the emperor is not wearing any clothes," he says. "It was stupid of me to think I could fight them. Everyone told me I couldn't, but I tried. Here [in the private sector] I can start over." The researcher says after he published his study, someone etched the words "kid killer" and "drug pusher" into the paint of his car.

The extent of DARE's ability to muzzle critical studies can be seen in the treatment of the most definitive test of the DARE program ever conducted. In 1991, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)—the research wing of the Justice Department—hired the prestigious Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to analyze the studies on DARE and determine the bottom line. Initially, DARE supported the "meta-analysis." In a 1992 letter, it urged state groups to work with RTI, saying it "will give us ammunition to respond to critics who charge that DARE has not proven its effectiveness."

"Everything was going along just fine," explains a researcher who worked on the RTI analysis and who asked that his name not be used so he wouldn't get "any more nasty, screeching phone calls" in the middle of the night. "That is, until we started finding DARE just simply didn't work. Then all hell broke loose."

In 1993, RTI presented its preliminary results at a San Diego drug education conference. According to *Sociological Focus*, a DARE supporter immediately responded by urging RTI to call off the research, saying: "If [DARE] fails, it will be making a statement about all prevention programs." After the conference, DARE launched an all-out war to sink the study. An internal memo from the July 5, 1993, meeting of DARE's advisory board offers evidence that Levant tried to squelch the study. The memo contains the minutes of Levant's speech. Levant criticized an advance copy of the RTI study. The minutes summarize Levant: "The results of this project are potentially damaging to DARE. DARE America has spent $41,000 in trying to prevent widespread distribution of what is considered to be faulty research." The minutes also noted that "DARE America has instituted legal action," aimed at squelching the RTI study. "The action has had some positive results," the minutes reported. "It has resulted in prevention of a second presentation by RTI. Legal action is intended to prevent further public comment until completion of academic review." Lochridge did not return a phone message asking for comment on the memo, and asking whether government funds had been used to stop the government from distributing a government-funded study questioning the efficacy of a government-funded program.

In the past, DARE had been unable to effectively refute its critics on scientific grounds, and its claims rang correspondingly weak. "They must not know how to measure things," maintained an Indiana DARE official about the Kokomo research at a local community agency. "If they could just see the kids' faces, they'd know how much good it's doing." Herbert Kleber, a Columbia University professor who heads DARE's scientific advisory board, says the RTI study was flawed. "It used the old DARE curriculum, which had already been substantially

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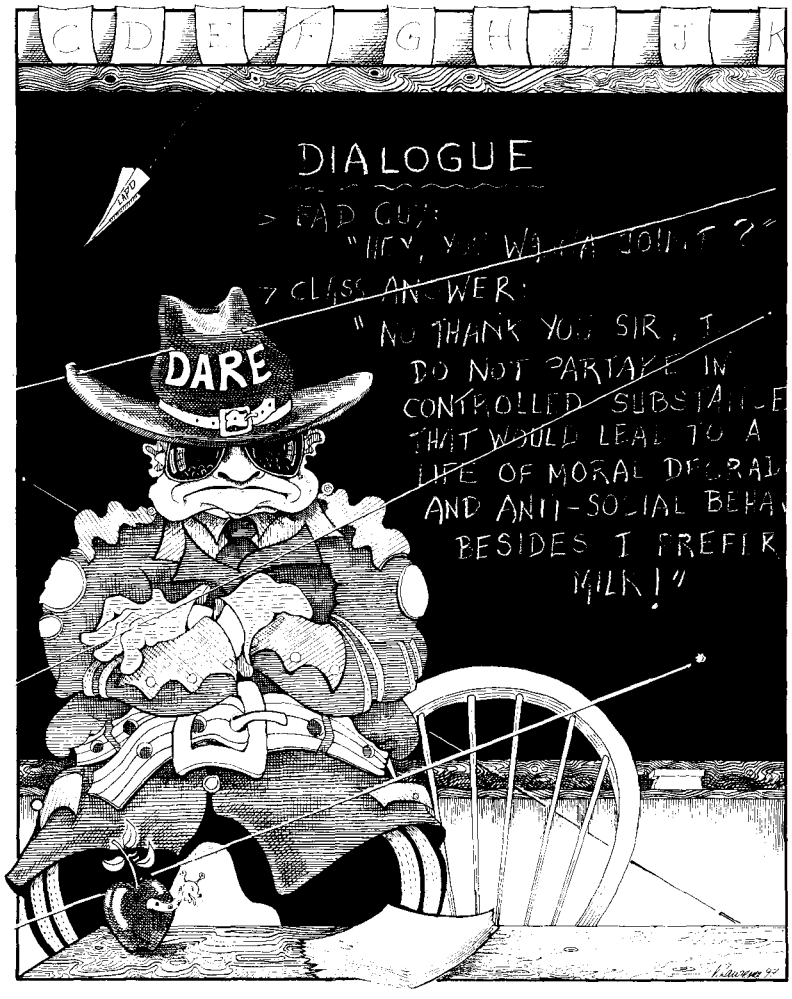
revised," Kleber says. "No, the new curriculum has never been examined."

So this time Levant turned to grass-roots pressure. According to one Justice Department official, Levant arranged for DARE supporters to flood the Justice Department with phone calls. Nationwide, many teachers, principals, DARE officers and parents believe in the program with almost religious devotion. In local debates, they have always been more than willing to make phone calls, write letters and hold forums to support DARE. This time, the callers stayed "on message," the official says, speaking almost as if from a script. "They'd call and tell us if we published the study, DARE would be sunk and millions of kids would get hooked," says the official. "Whenever we'd say the research looked mathematically good, they'd say, 'there's more at stake here than good statistics. Can you live with that?' "



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In September 1994, RTI finished the lengthy report. It concluded that, while DARE was loved by teachers and participants, it had no effect on drug use. It also went one step further, a step that DARE feared most of all. "What got [RTI] in the most hot water is that they said other programs work better," says Moran, the Mount Holyoke sociologist. In other words, RTI found that DARE is not merely a failure in itself, but crowds out money for programs that actually keep kids off drugs. RTI published a lengthy bibliography of some of the other programs. Kleber says the alternatives RTI looked at, which he calls "boutique programs," were only examined in highly controlled environments.

Levant upped the ante. Congressmen and mayors began calling the National Institute of Justice. The politicians stressed two messages: the curriculum had changed since the study, making it irrelevant; and the public did not want to hear criticism of an anti-drug program widely regarded as successful. The Justice Department official says the "phone rang off the hook."

One month later, for the first time in memory, the Justice Department refused to publish a study it had funded and successfully peer-reviewed. "We're not trying to hide the study," Ann Voit, an NIJ spokeswoman, told *USA Today*. "We just do not agree with one of the major findings." A puzzling statement, since NIJ hired RTI in the first place because it trusted them to evaluate DARE impartially. Still more puzzling is that even as late as six months after the San Diego conference, NIJ sent RTI memos praising the study. One note from Laurie Bright, NIJ's program manager, said the "methodology appears to be sound and DARE representatives did not offer any specific flaws ... [it] presented findings in a very fair and impartial light." Eventually, Jeremy Travis, who heads the NIJ, stepped in. He publicly reiterated that Justice had not caved under DARE's pressure, explaining that NIJ's independent reviewers unanimously recommended against publishing the report. Not so, according to one reviewer. William DeJong, a Harvard lecturer, told *USA Today*: "They must be misremembering what I said." Two of the independent reviewers who examined the report in March 1994 recommended that more analysis be done. But both urged the publication and wide dissemination of the executive summary of the report, and one praised the crucial section that analyzed DARE's efficacy as "well done." NIJ still has not approved the study, but will sell it upon request.

The same day Justice refused the study, *The American Journal of Public Health*—a highly respected academic journal—accepted it. It had conducted its own peer review and found the paper to be worthy. The Justice Department official says this infuriated Levant and that DARE tried to prevent the journal from publishing the study. While no one at *Public Health* would comment on Levant and DARE, two editors at the journal said that it stands by editor Sabine Beisler's comment of October 1994: "DARE has tried to interfere with the publication of this. They tried to intimidate us." When NIJ learned the journal was going to publish the study, it issued its own two-page summary. The summary oddly heralded DARE's popularity, but virtually ignored the thrust and bulk of the study, which showed DARE doesn't curtail drug use.

continued on page 26

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Source: Statistical Research Inc., 1996

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Today, the researchers who worked on parts of the RTI study remain thoroughly spooked by their experience. Two researchers at RTI, four at universities and two now in the private sector refused to talk more than briefly about the study. All but one said they were scared of losing their jobs. Three told me that their superiors had been contacted by politicians. "A state representative called my boss and asked if my research was really in the best interest of the community," said one state university professor. "Thank God my boss said 'yes.' I don't know if even tenure would stand up to that."

DARE's hardball approach is as well-known among journalists who have attempted stories on the organization as it is among academic researchers. James, a television news producer who does not want his last name used for this story, says that ever since he was Dared he doesn't have any doubts about retaliation. Several months ago, James, who works for a small Missouri station, produced and aired a short editorial criticizing DARE. In more than a decade of local news, it is the only item he has ever regretted running. After that show aired, so many kids called James so often at home to read him lessons from the DARE workbook that he was forced to unlist his telephone number. "You bet I was Dared," James says. "The calls came and on and on. I had to hear about so-and-so is offered a joint, but she says 'no.' I couldn't take it." Two callers told James that their DARE officer encouraged them to call his house at strange hours. After that, James's house was attacked with graffiti messages like "crack user inside" so many times, he moved to an apartment building. The local police, who run the local DARE program, spent no time looking for the vandals, James says. After a math teacher asked his son how "the pot-head dad" was doing, he transferred his kid to a boarding school. And, when the owner of a local diner asked him to stop coming to lunch, since other customers were leaving when he walked in, his wife took to calling him "Small-town Salman," after *Satanic Verses* author-in-hiding Salman Rushdie. James says he phoned Levant and asked him to "please call them off," but Levant never returned the message. "This may sound as if I'm being extreme, but I'm not. I went to Vietnam and that was less stressful," James says with a shaking voice. "There, the people I love weren't always being attacked. And this time, I know I'm on the right side."

In the past year, NBC's newsmagazine "Dateline" has become the most prominent news organization to be Dared. Starting in September 1995, "Dateline" producers began initial research on a hard-hitting story about how DARE doesn't work. They interviewed researchers who had concluded that DARE was a failure and students who couldn't remember the lessons. A "Dateline" camera crew also flew to Indianapolis, where an affluent, mostly Republican suburb was debating whether to keep DARE. For the past year, the school district had monitored a small pilot program. More than 100 parents showed up to the meeting and, according to those who were there, the majority vocally opposed DARE. According to a long-time NBC News employee, the show was scheduled to run on April 9, 1996—the day before National DARE Day. The following account of what then transpired has been corroborated by two additional NBC sources; essential details of it have also been confirmed by a DARE source and a Justice Department source.

Last March, Levant heard about the planned "Dateline" show. According to the NBC News employee—who does not work on "Dateline" but has read a series of letters between Levant and NBC officials—Levant wrote an "attack letter" to Jack Welch. Welch is the chief executive officer of General Electric, NBC's parent company. The letter called the segment a "journalistic fraud." Levant accused "Dateline" of "staging" the Indiana meeting. Still under the shadow of an infamous episode in which "Dateline" was accused of rigging trucks to explode, the NBC employee says Levant's accusations sent "Dateline" 's staff into a "whirlwind of activity." But Levant's accusation was a "flat-out lie—no ifs, no buts about it, a lie as low as it goes," says Betsy Paul, then the Parent Teacher Organization president of the Indiana school district. "I don't know how to say this strongly enough. I will tell you on any witness stand with God as my judge.... We had scheduled the meeting for at least a week before 'Dateline' said they were coming out here." Paul says David McCormick, NBC's senior producer for broadcast standards, called her. McCormick asked her if she had brought in "ringers" to stack the meeting against DARE. "And that was the biggest bunch of bologna I've ever heard," Paul says. "DARE just doesn't like that parents here figured out they didn't work." As further proof, Paul points out that this year DARE was eliminated in her school district and replaced with a locally developed program. "[Levant is] a big liar because if we stacked that meeting, if it didn't accurately reflect how this community thinks, then why did the school board eliminate DARE this year?" she says. "I'll say it again, he lied, and once more he lied."

Levant's letter to Welch contained other untruths, claims the NBC News employee. In the letter, Levant alleges "Dateline" producers would only interview him on the day his wife was receiving a bone marrow treatment for leukemia. Not true, according to the NBC News employee: "Dateline" offered Levant "several" date options. Levant also alleged "Dateline" staffers were interrogating kids in dark rooms like "old war movies." In truth, "Dateline" cameramen had turned off the overhead lights when they interviewed DARE participants because they were using their own lighting, which is standard practice. While the NBC employee says McCormick defended "Dateline" in a response to Levant, the story was put on hold. "DARE scared NBC's upper brass," the NBC employee says. "The story was, and is, solid. The people on it are some of the best in the business, but we did not want to look like we were going after a program that keeps kids off drugs. You can imagine that's a very unpopular position with G.E. So it was put on hold." David Corvo, the NBC vice president that clears "Dateline" episodes before they air, says, "There is no controversy about the program at NBC." He says all delays occurred because he felt the segment needed more reporting. "No

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way," the NBC News employee says. "That piece was solid in every way. Sure, you can always get another interview, and they did, but even before that it was better than much of what we air."

Then, in a September 1996 issue of *TV Guide*, NBC placed the following announcement: "'Dateline NBC': A Len Cannon report on the DARE program in schools. Its effects are 'statistically insignificant,' says segment producer Debbie Schooley. 'Research overwhelmingly shows no long-term effect on drug use.' The report visits schools in suburban Indianapolis."

According to the NBC employee, the *TV Guide* announcement killed the episode again. Dozens of DARE supporters, including Levant, called NBC. According to the employee, this time he made veiled threats of suing "Dateline." Despite the listing, the show didn't air. Corvo maintains that NBC "did not kill" the story and says if any lawsuit threats were made, they were not taken seriously. He maintains that NBC sent *TV Guide* the listing several weeks in advance, but when the date arrived, the piece still wasn't ready.

Next, the biggest gun in the drug wars tried to sink the segment once and for all. In mid-September, the White House's drug czar General Barry McCaffrey stepped in. "Dateline" had already interviewed McCaffrey for the segment. During the interview, McCaffrey ridiculed the research against DARE, but a Justice staffer says he did a "very poor" job refuting the mounds of evidence. Corvo won't comment on McCaffrey's interview, beyond saying the drug czar disputed the evidence against DARE.

On September 20, 1996, Donald Maple, a spokesperson for McCaffrey's office, wrote to "Dateline"'s executive producer. The letter asked "Dateline" not to use the taped interview with McCaffrey. Maple wrote that he feared the interview would serve "'Dateline''s purpose of painting DARE in a bad light." The NBC employee says pulling the McCaffrey interview might have dealt a "death blow" to the show. NBC's McCormick responded to Maple that the show's producer had written McCaffrey a letter before the interview telling him the purpose of the interview was to discuss research on DARE's effectiveness. While the network did not promise to cut McCaffrey's interview, the NBC employee explains, "at some point this story is much more trouble than it's worth." Maple says writing this kind of letter to a news organization is "uncommon," and he had never done it for McCaffrey before. But he says "Dateline" treated McCaffrey unfairly.

The show was rescheduled one more time, for Tuesday, February 4. That time slot—right after the president's State of the Union address—is commonly considered to be a "death slot." Clinton's speeches are renowned for running long, killing whatever television segment is planned to run next. And, that night, the segment did not run. As expected, Clinton's speech ran longer than scheduled and "Dateline" ran a show focusing on the O.J. Simpson verdict. "This system has worked. This show has not been killed. Whoever says that is out of the loop," Corvo says, adding that he has now cleared it to air. As of February 10, though, the segment had not been rescheduled. Corvo says it will be rescheduled when the executive producer of "Dateline" returns from vacation.

And researchers and reporters are not the only ones getting Dared. Some parents who question the program also say they've been strong-armed. In the San Juan Islands northwest of Seattle is a small town called Friday Harbor. There, dozens of parents have joined together in a group called San Juan Parents Against DARE. According to Andrew Seltser, the group's founder, nearly all of the members want drug education in the schools; they just don't believe the DARE program works. In August, Seltser's group collected more than 100 signatures on a petition asking the local school board to review the effectiveness of DARE. The debate about DARE overtook the small community, and became a matter of intense passion, with local DARE supporters raging against the parents who were challenging the program. In September, the local school board announced it would review concerns about DARE.

Then an odd thing happened. On October 7, 1996, the "CBS Evening News" aired a short segment that presented information critical of DARE. No one in Friday Harbor saw that segment, though. Thirty seconds into the story, Friday Harbor's screens went black. Randy Lindsey, the station manager for the local cable station, says when he watched a videotape of that night's news "it looks like someone pulled the plug." Lindsey can't explain the blackout. Friday Harbor, he says, often has problems receiving television signals due to sun spots. But sun spot interference, he says, normally distorts the screen differently. Seltser's group says they believe the program was jammed by DARE supporters since it came in the heat of the debate. And some Friday Harbor DARE supporters aren't denying it. One prominent local DARE supporter says it's "not important" whether or not the show was jammed. "Look, I'm not going to answer the question as to whether or not I know who jammed it. Hell, it might have been me," he says, asking that his name not be used. "What I am going to tell you is that TV program may have stopped DARE in Friday Harbor, which means more kids here would be on drugs."

DARE's public response to studies critical of the program has been to dismiss the studies as irrelevant. DARE says the studies are based on an old curriculum that may not have worked, but that the program now uses a redesigned curriculum that does work. The problem with the old curriculum, DARE officials say, was that DARE classes were not interactive enough; under the new curriculum, the classes are much more so. But this seems debatable, judging from a recent DARE class conducted by Detective Rick Myers at Barcroft Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia. Myers, a big man who looks very much like a cop, visits Barcroft's fifth-graders every Thursday to lead them in the DARE way. One week's lesson was about resisting peer pressure. Myers's lesson lasted about forty-five minutes. All but six minutes were spent on a lecture by Myers. To

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be sure, Myers used interactive role play during those six minutes, but researchers question the value of such role-playing as set out by the DARE curriculum.

For the first scene, Myers chose two kids: a brown-haired boy who was so nervous that he wobbled when he stood, and a tall girl who was so self-confident that she bowed when she got to the front of the room. Myers whispered the script to the two children and told them to face each other.

"There is a party on Saturday night at some person's house," the girl said matter-of-factly.

The boy said nothing.

"The people there, they will be drinking things that have [now louder and more slowly] al-co-hol."

The boy looked at the ground.

"I said, 'The people will be drinking [very loudly and very slowly] al-co-hol.' "

"No," peeped the boy.

Kindly, but firmly, Myers lectured the boy. "Posture. Eye contact. Posture. Eye contact," Myers told him. "You need to be confident. You're doing the right thing."

Take two. The girl said her first line. The boy said: "Oh." Myers shouted: "Posture. Eye contact." The girl said her second line. The boy stood straighter, looked the girl briefly in the eye, and said very quickly: "No thank you, I don't take alcohol. I prefer juice and milk." Myers led everyone in a round of applause. At one of the back tables, a thuggish-looking kid sat regarding this little scene with frank scorn. "He's supposed to say *that*? That won't work. He'd get the shit beat out of him."

For another scene, Myers chose a small girl with wide eyes and scraggly brown hair. She seemed a little nervous, but excited to have been chosen. Myers whispered the instructions into her ear. They faced off, standing about ten feet from each other. Myers walked up to the girl. "Hey, do you want to buy a joint?" he said. She replied, almost inaudibly, "No." Myers put his face close to hers. "Come on, wanna buy it?"

"No, thank you," she whispered.

Now, waving his finger in her face, Myers shouted: "Why not? Come on, buy it!"

The little girl, backed against the windows, said, again, "No." Myers led the class in a round of applause.

Drug researchers interviewed about Myers's scenes are dismissive. "That role play is absurd. If the kids learn anything at all from it, they learn not to buy drugs from police officers," one researcher says. "Making it more interactive means making it more like real life. This is not useful. Fun, maybe. Useful? Nope."

And Myers's class is typical. When I asked him if other DARE instructors did it differently, he was adamant in response. "No. The great thing about this program is that everyone in the country is trained the same way," Myers told me. "We are told to go exactly by the book. There is no room for modifying the program. No way. It's the same everywhere."

The claim that DARE's curriculum is changing and maturing seems to be more a matter of tactics than anything else. A longtime California instructor who recently retired, and who told me that the curriculum has not in fact changed much at all, conceded that saying the curriculum was in constant flux did have an obvious strategic benefit. Experts agree. Wysong and Wright wrote in *Sociological Focus* that if DARE is portrayed as a constantly evolving program it can't ever be studied and therefore can't ever fail. "Thus DARE is protected from criticism and remains 'forever young,' " they wrote. "In fact, in the view of DARE stakeholders, this is as it should be, because the program cannot be allowed to fail: the stakes are simply too high."

In fact, the most controversial part of the program—the DARE box—has remained unchanged despite years of criticism about this systematic attempt to encourage children to rat out the grown-ups around them, including their own parents. After the first class, the students, following DARE instructions, fashion a shoe box into a colorful mailbox, often decorated with DARE stickers. Each week from then on, for the entire seventeen weeks, students are encouraged to write anonymous notes asking any question they want. They are also allowed to accuse people of using or selling drugs or committing sexual abuse. These accusatory notes may also be anonymous. At the end of every DARE class, the officer reads the questions out loud. The officer does not read the accusatory notes to the class, but those notes are referred to the appropriate school and police investigative units for action. As James Bovard pointed out, Darrin Davis is not an isolated case. DARE students have fingered their parents in Maryland, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. In 1991, a 10-year-old told a Colorado 911 operator, "I'm a DARE kid," and urged the police to arrest his parents for marijuana possession. After his parents were arrested, the cop assigned to his school publicly praised him.

Parents and scientists in dozens of states have attacked the DARE box, saying that it reminds them of Stalinists rewarding kids for ratting on their parents. Lochridge, DARE's spokesman, dismisses their fears, saying it's mostly "urban myths." "Officers, as part of their training," he adds, "are taught not to elicit information about the [students'] personal lives." Lochridge says students are not encouraged to make accusations. But, according to one University of Illinois study, an accusation is made in 59 percent of all DARE classes. And while that number may be high, three Washington, D.C., area DARE cops interviewed said a DARE box note accused someone of using or selling drugs in at least one-third of their classes. All three cops said they "didn't discourage" their students from making accusations. Lochridge maintains the cops are just doing their job. "I don't know of any state which doesn't have laws requiring us to investigate any accusations of sexual abuse or drugs," he says.

In the end, DARE has an answer that trumps all. Even if there is some truth to charges that DARE doesn't work, what this means is that we need ... more DARE. "Well, if you teach people fractions or a foreign language, it's going to erode unless you reinforce it," Lochridge explains. "So the answer is more DARE. Kids need to get it more." And doubtless they will, whether it does them any good or not. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Money isn't everything

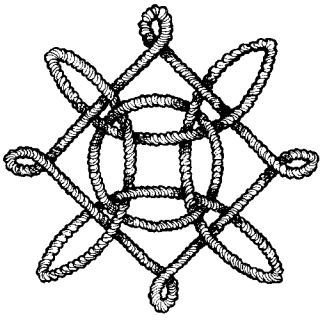
Among social scientists, "Asian values" are one of the subjects of the day. Even economists, generally dismissive of such murky concepts, wonder whether there is something in the values of the peoples of East Asia that helps explain their remarkable economic rise.

Another aspect of "Asian values" draws attention, and this is the claim of certain Asian leaders—most prominently Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia—that Asian democracy will not, should not, follow the path of the West. Individualism and an excessive attachment to individual rights, they say, does not suit Asia. The leaders of the People's Republic of China would undoubtedly agree, and China's explosive economic rise seems quite unaffected by the absence of democracy.

There is, of course, no necessary contradiction between democracy and economic development. Democratic Japan, after all, led the way in the economic rise of the Pacific Asian countries. But while Japan is a democracy, we in the West have always sensed something different, less democratic if you will, in Japanese democracy. Taiwan and South Korea have only recently become democratic. Singapore's democracy offers considerably less personal liberty than democracies in the West, and Hong Kong managed without an elected legislature until a few years ago (and that body will go out of existence under the coming communist rule). The "little tigers" haven't suffered economically since they became democratic, but it was not a precondition for their rise. In the West we tend to associate democracy with advanced economies. Is this a historical accident, or is there a necessary connection? The East Asian experience would suggest the first.

Hong Kong, one of the little tigers, served as the location of a conference on Asian values over the holiday season, and even a stay of a few days revealed some things that cry out for explanation, if viewed from the perspective of the West. A newspaper headline reported a "SLIGHT RISE IN TERRITORY'S MURDER RATE." The rise was from seventy-three murders in 1995 to seventy-seven in 1996. New York City was at the time congratulating itself for having cut the annual murder rate below 1,000 for the first time in decades. Hong Kong has a population of 6.3 million, New York has a million more. They are roughly equivalent in population size and in density. If great numbers of immigrants mean social disorder, Hong Kong should be as disorderly as New York, though its immigrants arrived earlier, in the 1950s and 1960s. Of course there is crime in Hong Kong, and drugs, and gangs, but their scale is minuscule by American standards.

Another headline announced "KIDS ACT AS TRIAD DRUG COURIERS," which seems alarming, until one reads the details. The number of youngsters aged 7-15 arrested for "unlawful society offenses" dropped from 262 in 1994 to 165 in 1996; for youngsters aged 16-20, the drop was from 286 to 167, derisory figures by New York standards. There are, another news item informs us, 12,929 inmates in Hong Kong prisons. Rikers Island in New York City holds many more, and if one adds New Yorkers in state and federal prisons, the total would be four or five times as much.



A third newspaper item warns, "WELFARE PAYMENTS SOAR AS MORE PEOPLE SEEK HELP." The social welfare department, it seems, spent 633 million Hong Kong dollars last year, something like 82 million U.S. dollars, about 1 percent of New York City's total welfare expenditures. The number of recipients rose to 160,000, which is about one-sixth of those on welfare in New York. The number of single-parent family recipients had risen to 12,340, also minuscule by American standards.

So there is less crime, less family break-up, fewer people on welfare and fewer people imprisoned in Hong Kong than in an American city of comparable size. Is there any good explanation? Sociologists tend to think that growing cities, drawing their populations from a socially more stable countryside, and subjecting them to the strains of changing occupations and mores, a chaotic urban environment and the density of city life, will experience a rising tide of family break-up, juvenile delinquency and crime. Hong Kong should exhibit all this, too. The people live under conditions of incredible crowding. The high-rise is the norm, for rich and poor alike. We think the high-rise is a terrible place in which to raise children and are dynamiting some of ours, but Hong Kong builds more and more, and its people clamor for them.

Hong Kong prides itself on a "lean government," which does not take more than 20 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. This is small compared to the total local, state and federal spending on a city of equivalent size in the United States. By a crude estimate, Hong Kong's expenditures appear to be two-thirds of New York City's, taking the municipal budget alone. It spends much less not only on social programs in general, but on education—the typical primary school in Hong Kong has a relatively high pupil-teacher ratio of 26:1—without any apparent ill effects.

All of which brings us back to "Asian values," the last refuge of someone who can find no better, more graspable explanation of these differences. The phrase simply pushes the problem one stage back. Which values, where do they come from, what sustains them? Further, as any visitor knows, these countries are very different from each other. So what is it that permits these diverse populations to experience such remarkably rapid economic growth—and yet suffer so few of the accompanying ill effects we would expect in the West? Everything from Confucianism to genetic differences has been proposed, but there is really no good answer.

Nor is it clear whether a different relationship between democracy and economic development will prevail in the Pacific East than has in Europe and North America. Democracy was not necessary for the economic growth of these countries. Must it not come as people become more prosperous? Will they not insist on having more say in governing themselves? I do not believe the highly educated people of Hong Kong, with a GDP per capita of 23,000 U.S. dollars, will accept gracefully a rule in which they have no say. But that is only my Western perspective.

Twenty-five years ago I participated in a study of the causes of Japanese economic growth and could see, on the basis of survey results, that the Japanese gave very different answers from those found in the West to questions about work and family and obligations. That helped explain the beginnings of Japanese economic growth—there seemed to be something like a Japanese equivalent of the Protestant ethic at work—but one could have expected those values to change as Japan became wealthy, just as the Protestant ethic fell away in the wealthier West. Japan did become wealthy, and the values did change—but only a bit. Perhaps the East is truly on a different course—one that will force us to construct radically new models for how societies achieve wealth and how its presence affects them.

NATHAN GLAZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Three of a Kind

Cynicism is greatly underrated as a creative force. Well, perhaps not "creative" but certainly "empowering." Sometimes, after seeing a film, we can imagine a group that sat down to plan the picture, scanning past hits and coolly deciding to refurbish ideas that have worked for others. When the renovation succeeds, it provides a double whammy: we can simultaneously enjoy the film and admire the gall of the people who made it.

For instance, the Czech film **Kolya** (Miramax). It's about a middle-aged man, single, of fixed habits, who is suddenly saddled with the care of a child. Is it possible that the director-writers-producers did not know *The Champ* with Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper, or its remake with Jon Voight and Ricky Schroder? (Prague has a major film archive, which includes prints of some American films otherwise unobtainable.) If they didn't know those American items, what about the French tearjerker *The Two of Us*, with Michel Simon and Alain Cohen?

Whatever the source, it seems possible that the director, Jan Sverak, looking for a role for his father, the grizzled actor Zdenek Sverak, remembered the man-and-child idea while conferring with the writer Paul Taussig, and shouted the Czech equivalent of "Bingo!" Z. Sverak may well have joined in, because he then developed his own screenplay.

They didn't want to squander the potential of filming in Prague, so the refurbishing included lots of continental atmosphere. Then, as further usable décor, large dollops of politics. The primary structural problem in this old story is not how to start it or sustain it but how to finish it; so *Kolya* is built backward, from the fall of the Berlin Wall. That rather large political event provides the reason for Z. to return the child, Kolya, to his Russian mother in what had been East Germany. Also, Z. is a political dissident who, under the Soviet thumb, lost his post as cellist with the Philharmonic. The end of communism not only reunites child with mother, it returns the cellist to his post and thus provides a tidy ending for the script.

J. Sverak, as director, knows shrewdly how to give the film mid-European flavor—café life, sly sexual doings, and so on. Z., a highly competent actor, fulfills his role of the grouchy bear with a secret soft heart. Vladimir Smutny shot the film with sepia-tinged coziness; Alois Fisarek edited it, except for an occasional drop of glop, succinctly. Result: an entertainment of some chuckle and charm, evoking an extra grin at the impudence of the makers. Wallace Beery himself might have liked it.

An Australian film called **Cosi** (Miramax) is even more daringly cynical. How could anyone make a picture about the performance of a show by the inmates of a mental hospital without snapping fingers at Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade*? Louis Nowra has apparently been snapping for a good while. First, he wrote a play that had some success, then he adapted it for the screen, and was joined en route by the director, Mark Joffe, and several producers. "Compare away!" they all say to us, shrugging at Weiss.

Probably, too, they shrugged at *King of Hearts*, an erstwhile "cult classic" (God, that phrase). In that French film a British soldier, Alan Bates, avoids the Germans by hiding in a mental hospital, and soon he adjusts his standards and values to those of the inmates, who seem a good deal more sensible than the world and its war outside.

In *Cosi* a young theater director is engaged to stage a revue with inmates of a mental hospital as a kind of therapy. With various sorts of pressure, they persuade him, secretly, to stage *Così fan tutte* instead, though few of them can sing or even think they can. With recordings and plot squirmings, the opera finally gets done, and several story strands are knitted together.

But how much thigh-slapping fun can one get out of mentally ill people? How much facile poignancy? *Cosi* has nothing like the implicit commentary of *King of Hearts*, and any comparison in gravity with *Marat/Sade* would be ridiculous. Besides, the directing and most of the acting don't give us the chance to like the film (if this were possible) on its own.

Another film about an angel who visits the earth? The very term "cynicism" blushes. What's more, **Michael** (New Line) is the second such story this season. *The Preacher's Wife* was at least a frank remake of *The Bishop's Wife*, which had Cary Grant as the angel who descends to help some people in trouble: in the

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hamlet. *Kenneth Branagh "directs" a bit too much, but his good performance and the superb ones of several others give line and power to it all. (Reviewed 1/27/97)*
Prisoner of the Mountains. *From Russia. This modernization of a Tolstoi story set near Chechnya has vigor and color, and it realizes the author's spiritual theme. (2/24/97)*
Sling Blade. *Written and directed by Billy Bob Thornton, who plays the leading role. Fine, sober, moving. After twenty-five years in an Arkansas mental hospital, a man tries to rejoin society. (2/10/97)*
Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern. *Jeanne Jordan and her husband, Steven Ascher, documentary makers, record a momentous transition in the lives of Jordan's Iowa farming family. Engrossing. Quietly important. (2/17/97)*—**SK**

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new version, Denzel Washington headed an all-black cast. *Michael* is not an avowed remake of anything, and it has John Travolta as the winged protagonist.

The larger significance of the current angelic trend I leave to feature articles in Sunday newspapers. Let's not hear that *Michael* was directed by Nora Ephron, high priestess of sophistication who managed to give a mod edge to the marshmallow *Sleepless in Seattle*. For *Michael* she co-wrote the screenplay with her sister, Delia, and attempted to lave this pietistic saga with the same feeling of cool. But it's as if *Vanity Fair* devoted an issue to Billy Graham.

The basic gimmick is to juxtapose the angel, Michael, with three hip New York journalistic types, one of them female, and with a winsome dog. (Emotional insurance.) The New York types meet the angel in Iowa and mean to take him, by car, to Chicago for a photo session. They have adventures en route. In the course of the trip the dog is run over and seemingly killed, but—which is why it happens, of course—Michael brings the doggie back to life.

The banality of the plot and the writing make the presence in the cast of the celebrated William Hurt, Andie MacDowell and Bob Hoskins all the more disheartening. Travolta is very much there, too, obviously, and is insidiously somewhat appealing; without him, Hurt and the others wouldn't have had this film to be invited to. But I've rarely seen so many well-known actors in one place who seemed to be saying, "Don't look, please. You know why we're doing this." Only Travolta seems really at ease, and maybe that's because in the recent *Phenomenon* he played an ordinary Joe who is suddenly gifted with supernatural powers; perhaps Travolta is developing a line of between-two-worlds films.

But the Sisters Ephron? Imagine them sitting there, after reading the original story of *Michael* by Pete Dexter and Jim Quinlan, with memories of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* and *It's a Wonderful Life* and *The Bishop's Wife* spinning cashily in their heads. The sisters look at each other and wink. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

On Cultural Power

It might seem a little disingenuous for Theatre Communications Group, the sponsor of the occasion, to have called the event at Town Hall a "discussion" rather than a debate, when the differences between me and August Wilson, particularly on the subjects of nontraditional casting and the place of black artists in the American theater have already been so hotly and publicly contested. But we are not really having a debate in the sense that one man can score enough points to prevail over the other. The issues that divide us are so complicated, and have been around for so long in so many different guises, that nobody can hope to end an argument that has gone unresolved for centuries.

All of the disagreements expressed by me and August Wilson are perceived to be over the emphasis on race in the American theater. In a sense, this is true; but to reduce these differences to racial categories is to regard them too narrowly. I believe our argument boils down to a philosophical dispute about the function of dramatic art and the nature of human identity. If I understand Wilson's position correctly, he regards theater partly as an avenue to political and cultural power—a medium through which a large disadvantaged class can dramatize its past injustices and, perhaps, find redress through changes in the social or political system. This activist view of art has had a long and honorable history, dating back at least to Plato, who believed that the function of the artist, when that Greek idealist allowed the artist any function at all, was to create ethical models of character that would help humankind evolve toward the ideal republic.

Aristotle, of course, rejected this idea, believing that the best drama, by which he meant tragedy, was essentially cathartic rather than activist, being based on action which is fated rather than on character which can be subject to change. I incline toward such a view, and away from a political view of art. We have had some sour experience in the twentieth century with political art, with efforts to regulate or to improve human nature through the agency of a political system. Starting with Plato, who banished the artist from his Republic, utopians, even the best of them, have usually ended in suppressing free artistic expression. "All revolutions," as Eugene Ionesco wrote, "burn the libraries of Alexandria." Today in America, we see a similar development in what is called political correctness—which, in its overzealous crusade to purge our language of offensive words, sometimes seems to be arguing for what one critic has called freedom *from* speech.

Out of a conviction that freedom of speech is essential to creative invention and critical thought, a number of modern artists, both black and white, *whatever their beliefs as citizens of the state*, have rejected the concept of art as an ideological instrument. The alternative to ideological art was eloquently summed up by Milan Kundera when he said that his primary artistic function was to speak truth to power. To speak truth to power: Isn't that why we revere the greatest dramatists from Aristophanes to Athol Fugard, and isn't that one of the major reasons that we cherish Shakespeare, notwithstanding his incorrigible need to flatter the reigning English monarchs? And James Baldwin, at least in his early days, also believed in speaking truth to power. In an essay called "Everybody's Protest Novel" he wrote: "Let us say that truth is meant to imply a devotion to the human being.... It is not to be confused with a devotion to a Cause; and Causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty." Such truth-tellers help to give physic to pomp. They expose the corruptions of power by revealing the reality behind human action and human motive—the workings of the human soul. And the human soul has no color.

Neither Baldwin nor Kundera seems much interested in using the artistic process to achieve power. Indeed, behind their words is the implication that the true artist must shun power, because power systems are not instruments of truth. They may very well be the enemies of truth. Those who believe in art as a political weapon, as a method of empowering the disadvantaged, may serve a vital social function—but there is a cost. A passionate political purpose occasionally obliges these artists to sacrifice individual truth for the collective good. There are times when it may be possible to justify such choices, if the right ends are achieved. But look at the downside. Who is to distinguish right ends from wrong ends? Art at its finest is inclusive, but ideological art is exclusive. The spectator is pressured to reach conclusions, coerced into choosing sides.

Political art is usually a persuasive form of melodrama, the opposition of right and wrong—or shall we say black and white?—when the truth is usually gray. Any large group with a common purpose—a commune, a community, a collective, a society, a nation—has diffi-

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From the Porch

The stores were bright, and not too far from home.
The school was only half a mile from downtown,
A few blocks from the Oldsmobile dealer. In the sky,
The airplanes came in low for Lindbergh Field,
Passing overhead with a roar that shook the windows.
How *inert* the earth must look from far away:
The morning mail, the fantasies, the individual days
Too intimate to see, no matter how you tried;
The photos in the album of the young man leaving home.
Yet there was always time to visit them again
In a roundabout way, like the figures in the stars,
Or a life traced back to its imaginary source
In an adolescent reverie, a forgotten book—
As though one's childhood were a small midwestern town
Some forty years ago, before the elm trees died.
September was a modern classroom and the latest cars,
That made a sort of futuristic dream, circa 1955.
The earth was still uncircled. You could set your course
On the day after tomorrow. And children fell asleep
To the lullaby of people murmuring softly in the kitchen,
While a breeze rustled the pages of *Life* magazine,
And the wicker chairs stood empty on the screened-in porch.

JOHN KOETHE

culty tolerating those nuances and subtleties and complications that characterize the search for the truth. Reality lies in the shadows rather than the sunlight. But large groups need certainty, not ambiguity. It was Bernard Shaw who said that "forty million Frenchmen can't be right." And it was Anton Chekhov, claiming to be a "free artist and nothing more," who said that his obligation was not "to solve problems but simply to present them correctly."

I believe that the artist must be free to speak truth to political power, and that means to black power as well. August Wilson stimulated considerable debate in his speech to the Theatre Communications Group in June of last year by announcing that he was a "race man" who aligned himself with such separatists as Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Mohammed. He criticized certain unidentified black "crossover artists" who "like house slaves entertaining the white master and his guests," as he put it, prefer to "slant their material for white consumption." He properly applauded the achievements of black theater professionals and correctly lamented the small number of professional black theaters in this country. And in perhaps his most controversial remark, he called on all black actors to repudiate nontraditional or "color-blind casting" as "the same idea of assimilation that black Americans have been rejecting for the past 380 years." A black actor in a nonblack role, he declared, stands on stage "as part of a social milieu that has denied him his gods, his humanity, his mores, his ideas of himself, and the world he lives in." Such activities, he added, constitute "an insult to our intelligence."

The unicultural path that Wilson has mapped out may prove a useful way to achieve black power. The question is whether it is the best advice to offer to black theater professionals. They may not wish to cripple their careers for the sake of racial exclusivity. My own reply to Wilson's speech was partly an effort to defend the rights of these artists to choose freely. It was also partly an effort to defend myself. In the same speech, Wilson, hinting that I was racist, tried to paint me as an enemy of multiculturalism, as one who believes African American theater artists to be inferior, and as a Eurocentric critic adamantly opposed to black theater.

These charges are categorically false. My writings and my actions are clear testimony to my support for the richness of multiculturalism—as long as it is not a pretext for promoting race hatred or generating separatism. In my own career as founder and director of two nonprofit theaters, and as leader of training programs at two universities, I have helped develop such brilliant black professionals as playwrights OyamO, Lonnie Elder III and Edgar White; such gifted black directors as Walter Dallas (now head of Philadelphia's Freedom Theater and the first director of Wilson's *Seven Guitars*); such accomplished black actors as Ben Halley, Franchelle Stewart Dorn, Charles Turner, Herb Downer, Starla Benford, David Allen Grier and many others. I have cast such accomplished black artists as Courtney Vance, Royal Miller, Maggie Rush, Rosalind Cash, Carmen de Lavallade, Cheryl Sutton, Lisa Vidal, Gilbert Price, Charles "Honi" Coles, Norman Matlock, Larry Marshall and scores of others, many of them regular members of my resident companies. My theaters have produced or presented works by Suzan-Lori Parks, Derek Walcott, Adrienne Kennedy, the Negro Ensemble Company and Anna Deavere Smith, many of whom, as a critic, I have also championed. Our commitment to color-blind non-traditional casting has been so stubborn and passionate that we risked being closed down through a court action by Samuel Beckett when he objected to our casting black company members Ben Halley and Rodney Scott Hudson in the American Repertory Theatre production of *Endgame*.

It is true that I have not been enthusiastic about some of August Wilson's plays, but this is not the record of a person who denigrates the achievements of black artists. And it is not racist, it is the very opposite of racist, to stand on the critic's right to apply the same standards to black theater professionals as to anyone else. I agree with August Wilson's appeal for more black theaters. I must note, though, that he is not entirely accurate to say that black theater is discriminated against in America since only one out of sixty-six League of Resident Theaters can be called black. The statistic is accurate, but there are almost 400 non-LORT theaters in the country that enjoy Theatre Communications Group membership, scores of which are black and receive funding from the National Endowment and other foundation sources (including Penumbra in St. Paul, where many of Wilson's works have been staged in secondary productions).

I agree with Wilson's plea that foundations be more supportive of such theaters, assuming they have established records. This is a better course for the funding agencies than pouring their multicultural dollars into efforts to "diversify" the audiences of mainstream theaters. I strongly believe, in fact, in general operating grants for all theaters of proven quality. But this support must not be viewed as a form of entitlement. Black theaters should earn their foundation and corporate funding by the same criteria of value and community support as any other. If Wilson knows of a worthy black theater that isn't being properly funded, he could give it instant recognition by rewarding it with one of his

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world premieres. (I note with satisfaction Wilson's announcement last week that he is giving the world premiere of his next play, *Jitney*, to the Crossroads Theater in New Brunswick, a black resident company, before circulating it to mainstream theaters on its way to Broadway.)

Although there is some value to theaters that confine themselves to a particular ethnicity, I admit some difficulty in approving Wilson's appeal for the self-segregation of black artists in racial enclaves. If these artists excluded themselves from what he calls the "Cultural Imperialists" and their "so-called classical values of European theater," we would have been denied the Othello and the Judge Brack of James Earl Jones, the Shakespearean shrew of Jane White, the Phèdre of Gloria Foster, the Shakespearean monarchs enacted by Denzel Washington and Andre Braugher, the brilliant performances of Morgan Freeman, Laurence Fishburne and Samuel L. Jackson, the ethnic spectrum of whites, blacks, Chicanos and Asians enacted by Anna Deavere Smith—all the manifold achievements of non-traditional casting and true interculturalism. In fact, we would have been denied Wilson's own plays, all of which have been produced by the very mainstream nonprofit theaters he refers to as "Cultural Imperialists."

I had thought from some of his recent letters and remarks that August Wilson would have liked to modify his position. But he now seems as adamant as ever on the subject of excluding blacks from plays written by whites. He recently denied ever saying he would not work with a white director, and so I must remind him of his article in *The New York Times* in 1990 called "I Want a Black Director," where he refused to allow *Fences* to be filmed by a white director. "Let's make a rule," he wrote. "Blacks don't direct Italian films. Italians don't direct Jewish films. Jews don't direct black American films."

Wilson also extended this "rule" to his works for the theater—rejecting Seattle Rep's Dan Sullivan, for example, simply because he was white—out of the belief that only blacks could understand what he called "the specifics of the culture of black Americans." In fact, one of the best films I ever saw about the black experience was *Fresh*, directed by an Israeli named Boaz Yakin. I suspect that Wilson will call this an expropriation of black culture, as he once called Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* "a bastardizing of our music and our people." But the truth is not subject to racial generalizations, however they serve the aims of power.

Indeed, in seeking to combat stereotypes, such generalizations may create another form of error—Albert Murray called it the "ethnographic fallacy"—in which one man believes he is speaking for an entire race. Many people in this country are of mixed parentage, including August Wilson himself. If no one person can speak for black Americans, no one person can speak for white people. There is no such thing as a monolithic "Eurocentric" culture. The greatest modern European artists have almost invariably been rebels against the existing culture, not its proselytes and its flunkies. When he was asked by an actor to write a play for blacks, Jean Genet replied: "But what exactly is a black? First of all, what's his color?" He might have asked the same question about whites.

I understand how Wilson could fall into the ethnographic fallacy. I did the same thing myself not too long ago in a belief that the leading character in my musical *Shlemiel the First* could only be played by a Jew. But the best Shlemiel so far, who exceeded my wildest expectations for the part, proved to be a Gentile member of our company, the Maine-born Baptist Thomas Derrah, just as one of the most convincingly Jewish of the sages in that show was Vontress Mitchell, a black company member. It is a principle of theatrical art that it defies generalizations, being subject, like life itself, to surprises, reversals and contradictions. General truths, Ibsen told us, have a shelf

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life of about twenty years, after which they become just as tired and worn out as any other convention.

We speak a lot these days of cultural diversity, but true diversity lies in acknowledging that every human being is an individual, and not simply a member of a racial, ethnic or sexual group. The variety of these individual differences is what bonds us all to each other. Ultimately, of course, the quarrel between me and Wilson is not just over the function of art or the function of race in the theater. It is over larger issues of inclusion versus exclusion, of integration versus separatism, of racial brotherhood versus racial division, of the way of Martin Luther King Jr. versus the way of the early Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan.

A great gulf still divides the races in this country, despite the significant strides of the last thirty years. It is an obligation of all men and women of goodwill to try to bridge that gulf and complete the still unfinished racial business of our nation. But America will only begin to fulfill its promise when we acknowledge that we are individuals first, Americans second and tribalists third, when we recognize that we are the same species under the skin, when we understand that all human beings are responsible not only for themselves but for each other, every mother's child. •

The Writer Takes a Hike

By Peter Schneider

A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia by Peter Handke translated by Scott Abbott

(Viking, 83 pp., $17.95)

When *A Journey to the Rivers* by the Austrian writer Peter Handke—his American publisher presents him as "Germany's foremost living writer"—appeared early last year in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, something curious occurred. Handke had entered the arena with the fury of a Zola, believing himself to be alone in his views, as he boldly challenged world opinion about the war in the former Yugoslavia, but he could hardly escape the crush of people who agreed with him. Defenders of Serbia were everywhere. This debate about the war, moreover, was conducted almost entirely in the cultural pages of the newspapers. The facts that Handke doubted or disputed—whether the Serbs were really the aggressors in the Bosnian war, whether they really established concentration camps, whether a genocide really took place under the direction of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic—the truth or the falsity of these facts was never considered.

The phenomenon repeated itself when Handke set out on a lecture tour. In theaters and universities, thousands listened raptly to the writer as he delivered his indictment and gave him standing ovations. In these appearances, exchanges with his audiences about his "provocative text" were not permitted. And no critics were admitted into the company of Handke's discussants on the podium. Instead the podium was stacked with sympathizers, among them the German-Serbian author Miriam Behan, who in her book *War Drums* put quotation marks around the words "Serbian aggression" and "concentration camps" and advanced the thesis that the reports of the war in the world media, from *The New York Times* to *Le Monde* to *Der Spiegel*, were directed by Bosnian and Croatian public relations agencies. Another one of Handke's discussants, a critic named Lothar Baier, affectingly announced that he was shocked to learn from Handke that every camera that was trained on Serbian soldiers always came to rest on an open bottle of slivovitz. In Frankfurt, a survivor of the concentration camp at Omarska asked to speak, and Handke angrily stormed out of the hall. And when, in Vienna, an open discussion finally was allowed to take place, Handke raged in the manner of a provincial bully.

The famous stylist was no longer in command of his style. When an individual in the hall rose to observe that Handke had never been in the war zone, whereas he, the speaker, had visited Sarajevo twenty times, Handke interrupted him: "Then drive there for the twenty-first time, asshole!" And he did not confine this manner of criticism to that individual. When the man who translated six of Handke's books into Slovenian protested in an open letter that Handke was twisting the facts, Handke denied that the man was his translator. When I reviewed Handke's book in *Der Spiegel*, he alleged that I write only in skintight jeans, since I must be in constant contact with my manhood. But in the national library in Belgrade, the scene of Handke's final appearance, he did not have to fear such disruptions. He was celebrated by Serbian television as the greatest living novelist of Europe.

The great stir that Handke's book created, the admiration and the relief with which a sizable portion of the public greeted *A Journey to the Rivers*, needs to be explained. Handke's book does not owe its impact to a new depiction of the war. His book is not really about the war. It is really about the way in which the war was presented by the media. The media-thirsty and the media-tired and the media-fixated of all classes, who already knew that we receive reality only in the form of fabricated and controlled images, suddenly had a hero. They did not really care about the truth about Bosnia. What mattered to them was that Handke's provocation came in the form of a travel report, in a document of personal experiences and personal impressions. This free spirit had traveled in a direction opposite to that of the world media, into the country of the aggressors. And his report of his impressions, with its poetic form and its unfamiliar angle of vision, painted a dissenting picture.

The illusion that Handke created for his public, in short, was the illusion of authenticity. Here was someone who stood up from his sofa and turned off his television and, pitting his naked eye against the powerful eye of the camera, set out on a path of his own and returned with news. You are all victims of a gigantic plot directed against the Serbs, a worldwide journalistic conspiracy! Didn't you notice how telegenic the martyred and the raped look? Don't you see the instructions of the photographer in the close-up of that crying woman? How "obediently" the photographer's subjects press themselves against the barbed wire of the camp! Whereas I, Handke, show you the reality behind the deceptions! Nobody seemed to notice that Handke could claim authenticity only for his genre scenes of a peaceful Serbia. For they were all he saw. In his battle against the media's account of the war, he, too, was an armchair general sit-

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ting squarely in front of his television set. He never visited the war.

And there is another reason for the sigh of relief that Handke's book provoked. For four years, Europeans watched idly as murder took place in their midst. If one is convinced that one cannot do anything against genocide, then one has two options: turn off the television or consider the horror from another perspective, so as to explain it away. When one watches injustice daily and one cannot (or one does not wish to) change anything, then one's indignation (or one's cowardice) seeks other outlets. One no longer speaks of the war in Bosnia, one speaks of the coverage of the war in Bosnia, of the montage techniques of reporters and editors, of their points of regard and their camera angles. Did the crime really happen at all? And so Handke performed an important service. He freed Europeans from the oppressive feeling of their own passivity. He taught them that it was right not to take sides.

There are many good reasons, of course, to study the reporting of the war in Bosnia. The impact of the media upon our sense of reality is enormous. Journalists are hardly immune to political and emotional pressures. The problem with Handke's accusations against the media is that they are themselves only a media event, as long as he spares himself the strenuous effort of disproving known facts. There was no genocide? Then prove it. Cite names, places, dates. Think empirically. For the criticism of the media's sensationalism cannot be separated from the question of what actually occurred. And the scandal of Handke's appeal for "justice for Serbia" is that he does not provide a single refutation of a single story, not a single shred of evidence, unearthed by himself or by others, that Omarska and other Serbian concentration camps were an invention of the media, not a single indication that comparable and hitherto-suppressed war crimes were committed by the "other side," not a single new fact.

The weapons with which Handke proceeds in his crusade against the media are quotation marks and question marks. This is not altogether surprising, since he never made the acquaintance of a war zone. Indeed, in an interview with *Die Zeit*, he characterized his visit to Serbia as a "honeymoon." And so it was: he was there with his new wife. In the autumn of 1995, however, Serbia was a highly original choice for a honeymoon. A man on his honeymoon is not keen to linger over mass graves. But such a man may not be qualified to instruct the entire world in the truth about the war.

Anyone who attempts to offer a new answer to the question of war guilt loads himself with the burden of proof. Anyone who implies that the pictures of a Serbian prison camp (Handke doesn't say which one) are posed, who expresses the view that the international war crimes tribunal at The Hague one-sidedly accuses Serbian war criminals and neglects Croatian and Bosnian war criminals (Handke doesn't say which ones), cannot make do with quotation marks. Handke writes about "'the notorious bandit and war killer Arkan'," as if his quotation marks suffice to disprove what is commonly known, which is that Arkan was one of the worst butchers of the war in the Balkans. It is not enough for a writer to look down condescendingly on the reporter and the historian; he must himself descend into the mess of history. Otherwise his revulsion is merely aesthetic. It was not terribly original to describe Josef Mengele as the "angel of death" or Saddam Hussein as "the butcher of the Kurds;" it was devoid of any verbal brilliance, but it was true. The criticism of language cannot do the work of the criticism of reality. It cannot demonstrate guilt or innocence.

In much of Handke's travel report, one reads only opinions: insinuations and outbursts against the "new philosophers," against Hollywood, against the "demagogic snoop sheet" *Le Monde*, against judgments "set down for the so-called world public," against the "horde[s] of foreign reporters," against the writing of Joseph Brodsky, which he finds "lacking both insight and nuance," and against (I confess) the writing of Peter Schneider, which is "infatuated with images of enemies and war." In the portions of his book that can be called reporting, we are given pictures of a hike through Serbia. Handke's country scenes, and his descriptions of the people he meets, are precise and vivid, and have a strange beauty. But one thing is not to be seen: the glowing embers of the war. The conflict itself is missing from his travels. He might have written these pages five years before it or five years after it.

On a few points, I can agree with Handke. He correctly describes the insupportable situation that the hasty German recognition of Croatia created for the Serbs living there. But when he expresses the same thoughts about the independence of Bosnia, he reveals himself to be utterly uninformed. "How ... is that *ever* supposed to end well, the high-handed establishment of a state by a single people ... in a region to which two other peoples have a right, and the same right...?" Apparently Handke does not know, or does not wish to know, that the Bosnians never wanted to become "a single people" apart from other peoples, that in the four years in which Sarajevo was attacked almost daily, many Serbs and Croats, who did not want to join their nationalist brothers, suffered the same fate as their Muslim neighbors.

Handke continues: "How would I have acted as a Serb there in Bosnia in response, to put it mildly, to the aggressive founding of a state, not suitable to me in my, our, own territory? Who now was the aggressor?" My, our, own territory?! The truth is that by the end of the war the Bosnian Serbs, who comprised around 33 percent of the population, controlled 70 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The truth is that the Bosnians, who were attacked equally by Serbs and Croats, were the only ones who never expressed a claim to ethnic purity and territorial expansion. The truth is that the first people to be tortured and murdered (in a particularly bestial manner) in the Serbian "cleansing" were the Serbian "blood brothers" who lived in the villages and the cities of Bosnia and refused to side with Greater Serbia. To the Serbian victims of the Serbians, Handke does not devote a single word.

The writer's famous subtlety becomes completely phony, completely precious, when—again in the cozy form of a question—he puts the very identity of the aggressor into doubt. "Who then was the aggressor? Was the one who provoked a war the same as the one who began it? ... Could such a provoking also be a beginning?" Now, unless I am mistaken, the aggressor is the one who is the first to resort to violence, the one who uses arms to expel a perceived enemy and to expand his territory. And it is well known that almost all aggressors react to "provocations." By Handke's logic, today's Czechs would have the right to force the Slovaks back into the old state structure, and Russia would have the right to force the Chechens and Lithuanians to obey its will. Canada could launch a war against Quebec.

Handke makes no distinctions. He seeks "justice for Serbia," but it was not "Serbia" or "the Serbs" who invoked the idea of an ethnically clean and cleansing Greater Serbia in the early 1980s and resorted to arms in the name of this idea, when Croatia provoked them through its declaration of independence. All this was the work of their current, still-not-toppled maximum leader and many of their intellectuals. And it was not "Croatia" or "the Croats," it was Franjo Tudjman and his gang, who dictated a similar policy to the Croatians. Handke's case for the Serbs is remarkably coarse. He

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might have defended the people of Serbia, the ones who are now in the streets of Belgrade, against their Greater Serbian warlords. Instead, in his lather against an international journalistic conspiracy, he speaks only of "the Serbs" and defends their chauvinistic leaders. He fails to honor the many Serbs who refused to be trapped in Milosevic's unreality and escaped the war of the jingoists by fleeing or deserting. "What would I have done as a Serb," asks Handke, "if suddenly a second-class citizen?" He gives his answer: "Had it been in my power, would I have taken up arms—naturally, only with many others of my peers and, in an emergency, even with the help of a disintegrating, aimless Yugoslavian army? Probably...." Peter Handke, in high boots and uniform!

"Because the roles of attacker and attacked, of the pure victims and the naked scoundrels, were all too rapidly determined and set down for the so-called world public all too quickly," complains Handke, "I did not want to trust this war and this war reporting." This is nonsense. No serious journalist glibly or hastily assigned the roles of attacker and attacked, as Handke claims. It is certainly true that all sides committed war crimes. Still, one has to interest oneself in the numbers. According to the calculations of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, for example, 85 percent of the war crimes in Bosnia were committed by Serbs, 10 percent by Croats and 5 percent by Bosnians.

Nor can the argument be sustained that the West has from the beginning painted "the Serbs" as the sinners. Quite the contrary. The British and French generals of UNPROFOR, as David Rieff showed in *Slaughterhouse*, made excuses for their historical Serbian allies hundreds of times, and never acted to restrain, or to retaliate against, their attacks. In the beginning, in fact, the only ones who had no friends or supporters were the Muslims. The position that Handke advances in the pose of a lonely fighter against world opinion—that he could not "simply take sides, not to speak of condemning," since he mistrusts "fixed accusations of blame"—this position was precisely the European consensus. Everywhere in Europe one heard that everyone down there is equally guilty, that it is a "civil war" and we should stay the hell out of it.

It was this continent-wide self-hypnosis that furnished Europe with its excuse for tolerating, despite the guarantees of "safe areas" and "enclaves" in Bosnia, all sorts of cruelties, including the great massacre at Srebrenica. And as far as German intellectuals are concerned, in four years hardly a single German voice of consequence took Bosnia's side. An attempt to organize a trip to Sarajevo for Günter Grass and other writers in the fall of 1994 failed, because the Foreign Ministry was not prepared to take responsibility for their security; and the German writers were not prepared to take the risk. I have been asked by Bosnian colleagues why none of the famous German writers who were published in the former Yugoslavia, such as Günter Grass, Heiner Müller, Christa Wolf, Volker Braun and Hans Magnus Enzensberger, uttered a word about Bosnia. I explained to them that nobody can tell a writer when and about what he should speak. My explanation didn't make much of an impression.

All the more depressing, then, that the first distinguished voice in the German language that the Bosnians will hear belongs to an apologist for their oppressors. I am not complaining that Handke is seeking to understand the Serbs, that he is demanding a more accurate view of them. When he forsakes the vanity of the heroic dissenter, when he is animated by a genuine curiosity about the landscape and the "people of Cain," Handke's book is an attempt to build a bridge between enemies. But he dynamites his own bridge with his tirades, with his groundless, sweeping suspicions of all the critics of the Serbs.

Handke charges that in the coverage of the war there were scarcely any images of wounded Serbians. This is true; but it requires a comment. In contrast to Zagreb, Belgrade did not give visas to any journalists who reported truthfully about the atrocities against civilians. And if there were such images, Handke continues, as in the expulsion of Serbs from Krajina, then it was "suggested" that "the same ones had already driven out another people." What does he mean "suggested"? Had not the Serbs in Krajina driven out 100,000 Croats? Must one forget the first expulsion in order to protest the second one?

It is merely coquettish of Handke to characterize his objections as "parasite questions." In reality, his questions are only a hiding place for assertions that were long ago researched and refuted by others. His questions are not questions at all, they are innuendos disguised as questions. Was the "old wonderful city [Dubrovnik]," he asks, "... actually bombed and shot up early in the winter of 1991? Or only—bad enough—episodically shelled?" What, please, is an "episodic" bombing? And if, as Handke implies, the bombings were really directed against "objectives that only were beyond the thick city walls," by what right were those more distant objectives bombed? By the right of the "provoked"? In any case, Croatian exaggerations about the destruction of Dubrovnik were exposed not by Handke, but by the journalists for whom he has such contempt.

It gets worse. Without a shred of new evidence, Handke rehearses the accusation, again with a question mark, that the Muslims themselves bombed the marketplace in Sarajevo. Is there absolutely incontrovertible evidence that the bloodbath in the marketplace was the work of the Serbs around Sarajevo? Of course not. The question is technically legitimate and humanly indecent. Assume, for a moment, that Muslim militias bombarded their own people in order to force a NATO response. Who, then, has the thousands of civilians in Sarajevo on his conscience in the years when they were murdered by snipers and grenades? And what is one supposed to think when Handke later complains that the coverage of the mass murder in Srebrenica was "again nothing but the sale of the naked, lascivious, market-driven facts and supposed facts," when he insists that the media should have asked the question: "What was the motivation [for the slaughter]? For what purpose?" Can one report the facts of a mass murder only if one can explain it?

Handke's wrath against the media becomes unbearable when, moved by his own courage to smash taboos, he discusses the images of the victims of ethnic expulsion. Those victims, he writes,

> didn't exactly "pose," but they clearly had been shifted into a pose as a result of the visual or reported perspective: doubtlessly really suffering, they were shown in a pose of suffering. And during the years of war reporting, while continuously and really suffering, and no doubt more and more, they compliantly and visibly adopted the requested martyr faces and postures for the lenses and microphones of the international photographers and reporters, as instructed, directed, signaled ("Hey, partner!"). Who can tell me I am mistaken or even malicious when, looking at the picture of the unrestrainedly crying face of a woman in close-up behind the bars of a prison camp, I see *also* the obedient following of directions given by the photographer of the international press agency outside the camp fence; and even in the way the woman clings to the wire I see something suggested by the picture merchant?

"Doubtlessly really suffering": it is worth noting that in the German original, Handke's words were *wohl wirklich leidend*, "supposedly really suffering."

Are we reading correctly? They were really suffering, but they were also shown

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in a pose of suffering? But why not in a pose of suffering, if they were really suffering? Or were they only posing? This is not only badly thought and badly felt, it is also badly written. A person who is suffering and is shown in a pose of suffering is still suffering. What does Handke want to tell us? That we should mistrust pictures of suffering if the suffering is too visible? The same thing could be said against the photographs that British army photographers took of the victims in Bergen Belsen.

I don't know what to make of Handke's contempt for journalists. It is a contempt that can be sold only in one market, in continental Europe—in contrast to the countries in which many significant writers, from Orwell to Hemingway to Garcia Marquez, earned their daily bread as reporters—where the journalist is often viewed as a kind of waiter for the poet, since it is beneath the poet to touch reality. But the brigade of journalists that I came to know in Sarajevo did more to spread the truth about the "civil war" in the Balkans than all the writers and the poets together. It was owing to the reporting of a British journalist that the concentration camp in Omarska was closed. The serious journalists did not reach their conclusions on the basis of prejudice or ideology, but on the basis of careful research and a flood of evidence that most of the horrific deeds were committed by Serbian soldiers. And thirty-seven journalists in what Handke ridicules as the "foreign reporting horde" paid for their work with their lives.

> What does the writer see, when he arrives in Belgrade on the eve of the Dayton negotiations?
>
> And the numerous street vendors were quietly ready for their customers, addressing no one (there was one who contradicted my image). I caught sight of no Serbian slivovitz drinkers but rather, around a street fountain, people who drank water from their hands; and nowhere was there any sign of or reference to the war.... The inhabitants seemed to me, however, at least at first sight, singularly animated ... and at the same time, yes, civilized. Out of a general consciousness of guilt? No, stemming from something like a great thoughtfulness, an overdeveloped consciousness, and ... an almost dignified collective isolation; and perhaps also out of pride.... No, in my eyes they could not be Serbian patriots or chauvinists ... or old Chetniks, and surely not former Nazi collaborators, but it was also difficult to imagine them as partisans with Tito ...

All this, "at first sight!" If this kind of intuition is the alternative to investigative journalism, then I am prepared to abandon the ranks of the writers and defect to the ranks of the journalists. For it is impossible to know, with a glance at a few strollers in Belgrade, whether they had anything to do with the war in the former Yugoslavia. The placid picture that Handke offers of an almost pre-industrial society, of calm, "strongly assertive" men, of vendors "quietly ready for their customers, addressing no one," of people who do not drink their booze from cups but instead draw "water with their hands from a spring"—this idyll is a polemic against consumer society. It is more of Handke's authenticity.

But such a "report" from a distant country could have been written about the Second World War in Germany until, say, 1943, in, say, the Black Forest, or upper Bavaria, where I grew up. Handke's picture of calm and earnest people, who have "a very special courteousness that did not display itself but simply suggested itself," is reminiscent of those scenes of calm and earnest people who had nothing to do with the war and were not at all like the Nazis and lived their lives undisturbed, as long as the German-initiated war did not return to where it came from in the form of Allied bombers and transform the country into ruins.

There are no pockmarked buildings in Handke's travel report, no burned-out houses, no men, women and children

MILAH PRESS congratulates Professor Daniel Jonah Goldhagen on his vigorous response to the critics of ***HITLER AND HIS WILLING EXECUTIONERS.*** This book should be on the shelf of all readers of history!

There are striking similarities between Goldhagen's central thesis and the view of the germans described by two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Ben Hecht. Hecht published his ***GUIDE FOR THE BEDEVILLED*** in 1944. It was reprinted by MILAH PRESS in 1996. Compare the following paragraphs:

"The Germans sat at desks and held conferences, discussing the most economical way to murder Jews. The Germans at those desks were not fantastic Germans. They were usual Germans...At these desks were all the German students and leaders and public citizens whom we will see again when, as tourists, we visit the streets of conquered Berlin." (Hecht, *Guide for the Bedevilled.* p. 142 1944)

"The first task in restoring the perpetrators to the center of our understanding of the Holocaust is to restore to them their identities, grammatically by using not the passive but the active voice in order to ensure that they, the actors, are not absent from their own deeds (as in, "five hundred Jews were killed in city X on date Y"), and by eschewing convenient, yet often inappropriate and obfuscating labels, like "Nazis" and "SS men," and calling them what they were, "Germans." The most appropriate, indeed the only appropriate *general* proper name for the Germans who perpetrated the Holocaust is "Germans." (Goldhagen, *Hitler and His Willing Executioners*, pp. 5-6. 1996).

Another excellent companion work is the groundbreaking research of David Morrison into the papers of Jewish leaders at the time of the Holocaust. Only this book gives the reader a complete understanding of what was done and what was not done to rescue Jews. Morrison's ***HEROES, ANTIHEROES AND THE HOLOCAUST*** drew this response from Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel: ***"Read this book. It deals with American Jewish attitudes during the dark period of Night. I found it informative, disturbing, stimulating. And necessary."***

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with missing or crippled limbs. Once in a while in his meetings with Serbs the heating fails, but not the light or the water, not the bread or the wine, not the "massive forest-dark honey pots." Yet this does not mean that Handke deliberately obscures the war. The absence of the war, and the consequences of the war, from Handke's book has a simple reason: the war in the former Yugoslavia hardly broke a window in Serbia. Handke visited a land and a people whose satraps conducted their war of conquest and cleansing—in the name of the many unwarlike Serbs whom Handke sympathetically describes, but not with their approval—beyond the borders of their own country.

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Making Amends

BY CASS R. SUNSTEIN

Explicit and Authentic Acts: Amending the U.S. Constitution, 1776-1995 by David E. Kyvig

(University Press of Kansas, 604 pp., $55)

It is remarkable, though it is not exactly news, that members of Congress have been spending a lot of time on constitutional amendments. There is now a large budget deficit. Should we simply outlaw it, by means of the Constitution? The Supreme Court says that protesters have a constitutional right to burn the American flag. If that is a vexation, might we fix it with a new constitutional provision? Last year President Clinton added his own proposed amendment to the mix, designed to protect "victims' rights," and there are many other people who think that our criminal justice system does too little to help "victims." Perhaps a constitutional change would make things better.

The enthusiasm for constitutional amendments has proved remarkably contagious. The right to life, congressional term limits, minimal welfare guarantees, the line-item veto, school prayer, public prayer, religious freedom, environmental protection, exclusion from citizenship of children of illegal immigrants: all these, and more, have attracted enthusiastic support from people interested in changing the Constitution. Over 200 amendment proposals are now pending before Congress. I will bet that within the next decade the nation will seriously debate constitutional amendments designed to make English the official language of the United States, to close our borders to immigrants, to solve the problems of Social Security, and both to forbid and to allow homosexual marriage.

All the noise has made it hard to focus on what the amendment process is, or was, supposed to be about. There is an intriguing link, of course, between the idea of constitutional amendment and the boldest aspirations of the Constitution's Framers. The Constitution was itself a self-conscious exercise in popular sovereignty, having emerged from an extended process of deliberation by "We the People." And Article V of the Constitution—the provision that momentously authorized amendments—was indispensable both to the theory of the document and to its ratification.

For the founding generation, the animating feature of the American departure from English constitutionalism was the rejection of the monarchical heritage in favor of a new conception of political sovereignty. In America, sovereignty lay with the people, not with the king, and the people were to be sovereign over the Constitution itself. This idea helped to support the Founders' belief that the Constitution was far from permanent. It was in this spirit that Thomas Jefferson complained, near the end of his life, that

> Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. I knew that age well; I belonged to it, and labored with it.... It was very like the present, but without the experience of the present ... and this they would say themselves, were they to rise from the dead.... Let us not weakly believe that one generation is not as capable as another of taking care of itself.... [T]he dead have no rights.

Jefferson was more enthusiastic about constitutional change than some of his compatriots, especially James Madison. Still, in associating the amending of power with the central idea of republican self-government, the founding generation was remarkably unified.

Two hundred years later, the American Constitution, whatever it may say, is remarkably different from the Constitution that was bequeathed to us. We can see, as the Framers could not, that the Constitution changes in several ways, not just one. It has been changed by textual amendments, the Article V way; but changes in constitutional understandings have also occurred as a result of popular movements that altered not a single word in the text. And constitutional change can be led by judges, who produce new "readings" of the Constitution when they resolve particular disputes. To see how the Constitution changes, and to understand the current debates over constitutional amendment, it is important to understand the peculiar features of these diverse methods for producing changed constitutional understandings—and this raises big questions about democracy, judicial review and especially populism. But this is to get ahead of the story.

David Kyvig's book is an extended historical discussion of constitutional amendment in America. It is exhaustive and sometimes exhausting. Kyvig gives a magisterial overview, and fascinating detail, without providing clear organizing claims. From the historian's welter, though, three themes emerge. First, the amendment process has mostly functioned in the way it was intended to function: it has provided a formal means by which numerous American-style revolutions, large and small, have occurred nonviolently and through specified legal forms. Second, the massive, constitution-like changes of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal could and should have occurred through the amendment process. We can easily imagine a textual amendment that would have supported the New Deal's shifts, by increasing the authority of the national government, making room for more in the way of administrative and presidential power and limiting rights of private property and freedom of contract; and if the New Deal had been officially ratified by constitutional means—as it might have been, but for the country's traumatized reaction to the prohibition amendment—it would have been more legitimate, and its leg-

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acy would have been more enduring. And third, the debate over constitutional amendment broaches America's complicated and ambivalent attitude toward a single notion with strong Jeffersonian roots: democratic populism. This last theme is mainly implicit in Kyvig's book, but in some ways it is the most interesting theme of all.

As his daunting subtitle suggests, Kyvig's discussion is organized chronologically. He begins with a detailed consideration of the roots and the nature of the American theory of constitutionalism, which, as he shows, was intimately connected with the commitment to popular sovereignty. The Declaration of Independence set the stage, announcing the American Revolution through its vigorous assertion of the primacy of self-government over traditional legal formalities. The national Constitution stemmed from an insistence that the people are superior to their rulers, even when those rulers are democratically elected. The Constitution's superiority to ordinary political choice reflected a judgment that the people, not the government, must have the last word. In Kyvig's formulation, the power of constitutional amendment, making a secure place for revolutionary reform by non-revolutionary means, was a "corollary" to the basic theory.

To the Founders, this much was altogether clear. There was no consensus, however, about what the amending power should entail. What role should the national legislature play in constitutional change? The initial Virginia plan said that "provision should be made for amendment whensoever it shall seem necessary," and also that "assent of the National Legislature ought not to be required thereto." The idea seemed to be that amendment would be an act of the people, not an act of Congress, and hence a requirement of legislative assent would be an anti-republican restriction on self-government. George Mason offered important support for this view, suggesting that there should be "an easy, regular, and Constitutional way" instead of "chance and violence," and that the national legislature might "abuse their power, and refuse their consent on that very account."

As so often, it was Madison who proposed the ultimate accord, allowing two routes to amendment. First, two-thirds of both Houses of Congress may propose amendments, to be ratified by three-fourths of state legislatures. Second, two-thirds of state legislatures may apply to Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments, again to be ratified by three-fourths of state legislatures. In either event, ratification may take place

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Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotic-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as ruthless as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs, who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of Pan Am flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

Military Security—The Golan is about the size of Queens, NY. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks–backed up by missiles and airplanes–could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

In its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, Israel had been prepared to make far-reaching concessions to Syria on the Golan, in exchange for real peace. But Benjamin Netanyahu, who has promised his people *shalom batuach* (peace with security) is not prepared to give up all of the Golan and to return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to them. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, most of which—with the recent exception of Jordan and of the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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not by three-fourths of state legislatures, but by three-fourths of state "conventions." This is Article V in its current form.

Article V was no mere detail. It was indispensable to the ratification of the Constitution. Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Massachusetts all faced significant opposition to the new framework, and in all of these states the prospect of amendment was crucial. Speaking floridly, and for many, James Iredell said at the North Carolina convention: "Happy this, the country we live in! The Constitution before us, if it be adopted, can be altered with as much regularity, and as little confusion, as any act of Assembly...." And George Washington summarized the new dispensation when, in leaving office in 1796, he stressed that the government is "the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation," and the Constitution "till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people is sacredly obligatory upon all."

Much of the popular enthusiasm for the amendment process, of course, was connected with the biggest complaint of the Constitution's critics: the absence of a bill of rights. Ratification took place with the understanding that such a bill would likely be added in the near future. And just two years after ratification of the Constitution, the nation ratified the ten provisions of the Bill of Rights. They comprise more than one-third of the total amendments to the Constitution.

For the next seventy years, the amending power fell into a state of near-disuse. (The Eleventh Amendment, creating a kind of sovereign immunity for states in federal court, and the Twelfth Amendment, making technical changes in the Electoral College, are important but narrow exceptions.) The reasons for this development are not entirely clear. A significant factor was undoubtedly the interpretive practice of the Supreme Court, especially under John Marshall. The Court construed the powers of the federal government very broadly, in a way that allowed adaptation to new circumstances, and hence made amendment less necessary. In this way, judicial interpretation, an important source of change in constitutional meaning, became a crucial complement to constitutional amendment.

At the same time, several early eighteenth-century efforts to solve national problems through the amendment route failed to achieve consensus. The most notable example was slavery, where compromise proved impossible. The process of revolution by legal forms was superseded by outright warfare. But the Civil War was followed by crucial constitutional amendments, constituting what is sometimes described as a second American Revolution and a second constitutional "regime." Such descriptions are not hyperbolic. The Civil War and its amendments fundamentally altered the three cornerstones of the constitutional order: individual rights, federalism and the separation of powers. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and gave Congress broad new authority; the Fourteenth Amendment contained the privileges and immunities clause, the equal protection clause and the due process clause, inaugurating an enormous expansion in individual rights, providing the basis for most of modern law of equality and liberty and also granting new powers to Congress; and the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the vote regardless of race. Kyvig offers a detailed account of these changes.

After the Civil War period, there was little serious amendment activity until the second decade of the twentieth century, when the progressive movement, enthusiastic about populist democracy, fueled new interest in constitutional change. Two seemingly unrelated proposals proved successful, and had nation-transforming consequences: the ban on alcoholic beverages and the guarantee of the vote to women. What is especially intriguing is that the first of these amendments seems truly bizarre, the model for fanatical constitutional populism, a serious warning about any new amendment proposal; and the second seems uncontroversially correct, a reflection of what sustained popular deliberation can do, a solid precedent to be invoked by any enthusiast for constitutional change. In fact, the two amendments were closely linked. Women, including many interested in sex equality, worked hard on the temperance movement, partly for reasons of sex equality itself, arguing that alcoholism produced domestic violence and proved destructive of women's rights within the family. Many reformers saw close connections among the seemingly diverse causes of family protection, temperance, marriage and property law reform, voting rights, health reform and access to education and employment.

Kyvig shows even tighter links. In 1852, Susan B. Anthony was a vigorous crusader for temperance, but when she rose to discuss a motion at the convention of the New York Sons of Temperance, she was prohibited from doing so and told that "women were not invited there to speak but to listen and learn." Perceiving misogyny in the organized temperance movement, Anthony left the hall and founded a women's anti-drink organization; and having done so, she was repeatedly excluded from male-dominated organizations. In 1853 she abandoned the cause of temperance and joined Elizabeth Cady Stanton to work for the right to vote, which was then seen as the most radical of women's demands. What became known as the Susan B. Anthony amendment was taken up in 1913 by Alice Paul, a Quaker social worker, ultimately producing a parade of 50,000 suffragettes marching down Pennsylvania Avenue before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. This parade proved pivotal to the success of the suffrage campaign, as indifferent District of Columbia police officers provided the marchers with little protection from a large and abusive crowd.

By 1920, progressive sentiments, together with the success of the prohibition and women's suffrage campaigns, generated a high degree of national enthusiasm for the whole idea of constitutional amendment. For the progressives—in some ways Jefferson's heirs—constitutional change was a central instrument by which the sovereign people governed themselves. But the enthusiasm was short-lived. A part of the problem involved the women's movement, which quickly became divided over possible constitutional remedies. In 1923, Alice Paul introduced a simple equal rights amendment—"men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States"—but it went nowhere. The deeper problem was national prohibition. Objections to prohibition increased steadily after ratification, as about one-third of Americans continued to drink, and the concern over that amendment turned into a general concern about amendment itself. Critics of the prohibition amendment invoked constitutional conservatism to attack the amendment (and, implicitly, amendments themselves) as a form of constitutional "mutilation." Kyvig suggests that the failure of the prohibition amendment played a role in discouraging explicit constitutional amendment in the New Deal era.

The New Deal is a central focus of Kyvig's book, which is altogether proper. The New Deal is an important period for anyone thinking seriously about the topic of constitutional change. Indeed, the New Deal can be described as nothing less than America's third constitutional revolution. Kyvig's special interest is in Roosevelt's consideration, during the crucial period between 1935 and 1937, of explicit constitutional change as a way of legitimating the New Deal reforms. Kyvig firmly endorses the view that the New Deal profoundly altered basic constitutional commitments. It did so by

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granting the national government powers that were formerly held by the states, dramatically expanding the powers of the president, creating a massive federal bureaucracy with a new set of administrative agencies, and reconceiving individual rights in a way that stressed market freedoms much less and the interest in economic and social security much more. What is especially remarkable, and to Kyvig especially anomalous, is that all this occurred without changing a single word in the Constitution.

To be sure, the New Deal reforms were resisted on self-consciously constitutional grounds, partly by the Supreme Court, partly by the nation as a whole. And before 1937, many New Deal enthusiasts had decided to support a constitutional amendment extending federal power under the Constitution's "general welfare" clause, inviting the national government to engage in a wide range of particular tasks. Still, Roosevelt and his advisers thought the amendment path "thorny" and likely to make the New Deal "bog down." For this reason, Roosevelt endorsed interpretation over amendment, urging publicly that the "vital need is not an alteration of our fundamental law, but an increasingly enlightened view with reference to it." Privately, he said that the real problem was intensely practical: there was too much money on the line for business interests to be willing to allow a constitutional amendment to pass. Kyvig thinks that Roosevelt was wrong. In his view, a constitutional amendment was indeed possible. The Roosevelt administration badly misunderstood the mechanics of the process, and, perhaps most damningly, the Constitution was for the New Dealers "a stumbling block to be circumvented, not a structure to be lived in and remodeled to suit." Kyvig invokes George Washington, with his enthusiasm for "explicit and authentic acts" of the people, against Roosevelt.

In the 1930s and 1940s, there were a number of efforts, some with substantial support, to limit the effect of New Deal reforms. But the most significant of these went nowhere. The nation saw little successful amendment activity until the 1960s, which produced no fewer than four amendments: granting the right to vote in presidential elections to residents of the District of Columbia; banning poll taxes; lowering the minimum voting age to 18; and making arrangements for presidential succession in case of presidential disability. These were important, to be sure, but during a period of national tumult, they were relatively modest and targeted.

In the same general period, Congress endorsed two important amendments that failed to achieve the necessary support among the states. The first of these would have granted the District of Columbia representation in Congress. The second was the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), rooted in the work of Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony. Kyvig thinks that the ERA's failure—a long and complex story, well-told here—was relatively unimportant and that the principal lesson of its failure is that constitutional change, via legal interpretation, can occur without formal constitutional amendment. In fact, the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, taken to embody a general principle not limited to race, has come to operate as a ban on sex discrimination.

The 1960s also saw the emergence of what might be called the modern era of constitutional amendment. Constitutional change has been sought largely by conservatives disturbed or even enraged by certain cultural and political trends, often associated in some vague way with the Supreme Court or "the courts." Amendment has been urged as a way of restoring a golden age of responsibility, unity, self-discipline and old-fashioned virtues. In the 1960s, conservative populists pressed a whole series of proposed amendments. They attempted to restore prayer to the public schools, to repeal the one-person-one-vote rule, and to ban "busing" remedies as a response to racial segregation. All of these efforts failed, but they set the stage for the developments to follow. Since the election of Ronald Reagan, as Kyvig shows, amendment politics have had a social conservative edge closely associated with cultural issues. Consider some of the recent proposals: to allow government to prevent flag "desecration," to protect "victims' rights," to balance the budget, to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*, to restore prayer to schools, to protect "religious freedom."

Of these, the balanced budget amendment has been the most widely supported and hotly contested. Congress may propose that amendment before long. Of the current crop of proposals, it stands the greatest chance of near-term ratification. And although it involves economic policy, it is reasonably grouped with the more conspicuously cultural amendments, whose appeal stems from their association with values such as self-restraint.

Kyvig's book is packed with intriguing details, but its importance lies in how it shifts focus away from particulars and toward some broader points. The debate over constitutional amendment has everything to do with populism as a political creed and with the appropriate role

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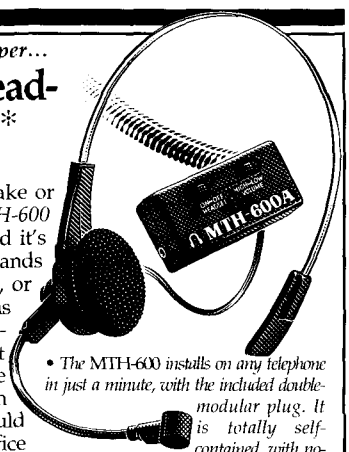

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of the Supreme Court in American government. No one thinks that the Constitution is carved in stone. A constitution cannot possibly mean the same thing now that it meant several generations ago. Everyone knows that more frequent amendment would involve more in the way of populism—government by referendum—and everyone knows that this would be a threat to the Supreme Court's current role. In this way, we can explain some of the ironies in the present political discussion. Liberals have been playing Edmund Burke, emphasizing in solemn tones the need not to tinker with our constitutional heritage. Conservatives have been playing Thomas Jefferson, invoking the voice of the people and seeing constitutional change as an indispensable way of solving present-day dilemmas. Still, the appearances are misleading. The real issues involve the risks of populism and the legitimacy of the interpretive practices of the Supreme Court.

Kyvig is not very systematic in unpacking the actual sources of constitutional change; he is also not very systematic in defining the whole idea of constitutional change. To understand our history and our options, it is important to emphasize that explicit amendment is only one way that understandings of the Constitution change. Even without a textual amendment, periods of sustained social upheaval can produce entirely novel readings of the Constitution. The text itself is not changed, but it is seen in a new, sometimes radically different way. The New Deal is only the most obvious example. Not only Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but also Martin Luther King Jr., Gloria Steinem and Ronald Reagan have helped to produce a form of constitutional change in America.

Consider the current understandings of the Constitution's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws." With respect to both race and sex discrimination, that provision means something very different now from what it meant in 1950. Why has this change occurred? Undoubtedly the civil rights movement contributed a great deal to the view (once quite radical, now taken as a constitutional truism) that government may almost never discriminate on the basis of race. And as Kyvig shows, the women's movement has had enormous success at a level of constitutional principle, even with the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment. The Supreme Court's decision just last year, striking down all-male education at the Virginia Military Institute, confirms Kyvig's suggestion that the law has gone a long way toward recognizing what the Equal Rights Amendment would have required.

The Court's opinion was written by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the most important legal advocate for sex equality and now regarded as a heroine of constitutional law. The fact that Ginsburg is so regarded is a tribute to changing social judgments on the matter of sex equality; it facilitated her appointment to the Supreme Court, an appointment that helped to confirm the view that with respect to sex equality, constitutional understandings have been dramatically revised. Apart from textual amendments, then, a kind of constitutional change occurs as fresh social judgments press hard against pre-existing understandings of the old text. Once they become widespread, culturally and politically, those judgments eventually win acceptance within the Supreme Court. And changes of this less formal kind have another distinct attraction: in a sense, they are democratically achieved.

And there is still another route to constitutional change, involving a less democratic, judge-led process. Much of constitutional law is a tradition of "common law" development, as judges specify and alter constitutional meaning through analogical reasoning in the course of deciding individual disputes. Slowly, incrementally, case by case, sometimes almost imperceptibly, substantial changes occur over time. Kyvig is focused on large-scale decisions, and on whether they happen through the formal amendment process, and so he gives scant attention to this phenomenon. But it is as a result of this process of common law development that the meaning of the Constitution is often different from what it was, say, thirty years ago.

Take just one example. Americans often talk as if "the freedom of speech," as a constitutional principle, means now what it has always meant, as if Supreme Court decisions protecting alcohol advertisements, or expenditures on campaigns, or disclosure of the names of rape victims, or Larry Flynt, are entirely continuous with the work of James Madison. In the last thirty-five years, however, judicial decisions have thoroughly revolutionized the law of freedom of expression—not through a single step, but through a process of analogical reasoning and case-by-case development. It is in this extraordinary period of new readings that the Court has protected commercial advertising, prohibited the states from applying their ordinary libel law, protected advocacy of crime (including violent overthrow of government), given rise to the general understanding that "hate speech" may not be banned, and greatly expanded the protection given to sexually explicit speech. Each of these developments renovates pre-existing law. Our First Amendment is very different from the First Amendment of our parents, let alone that of the Founders. Similar innovations can be found in the law governing religious liberty, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures and separation of powers itself.

These points beg an important question. How do we know when the Constitution changes? When the Constitution is read in a new way, it may or may not be "changed." New understandings may be a way of keeping faith with old constitutional provisions under altered conditions. If the Fourth Amendment, banning unreasonable searches and seizures, is applied to wiretapping, or eavesdropping on the Internet, it is being understood in a new way, but it is not really being changed. When the Supreme Court interpreted the commerce clause to give Congress far broader powers in 1940 than it had in 1820, perhaps it was because changed conditions made the economy so much more interdependent, and hence the new reading may not have changed the Constitution at all. Sometimes novel readings of the Constitution, by popular movements or by judges, really do change the Constitution, because those readings cannot fairly be understood as a way of interpreting it under current conditions. But novel readings, even apparently adventurous ones, are sometimes reasonable interpretations and ought not to qualify as constitutional "amendments." Whether we have constitutional change depends on our theory or interpretation. Kyvig does not really discuss these distinctions. He does not investigate the thin and contestable line between a genuine amendment, textual or not, and a novel reading that keeps faith with the existing Constitution.

This is the picture that emerges. Changes in constitutional understandings are brought about by three mechanisms: altered constitutional text; reforms in social judgments about facts, values and needs, ultimately ratified judicially through new understandings of old text; and common law. There is a continuum, of course, between the second and third mechanisms. Common law change is unlikely to occur unless democratic forces are moving in the same direction. There are links between the Supreme Court and the electorate: the appointments process, the Court's fear of intense public backlash, the Court's inevitable reaction to intensely felt public desires. These links assure that the common law process is affected by widely held popular convictions.

We are now in a position to see that

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those who are hostile to the recent amendments are not engaged in ancestor-worship and do not really believe that the Constitution is "too sacred to be touched." They favor the more gradual, more interpretive, less populist methods that have dominated constitutional processes since the New Deal. We are also in a better position to evaluate Kyvig's enthusiasm for "explicit and authentic acts." A judgment on that subject must depend not only on history, but also on an assessment of which institutions and practices are likely to create the most serious risks. Which mechanisms of constitutional change, formal amendments or changed readings, are best?

If the Supreme Court's interpretive methods are systematically illegitimate and unreliable, if the common law process is an abuse and a charade, then explicit and relatively frequent amendment makes a good deal of sense, as a way of correcting mistaken interpretations and deterring the Court from continuing its course. Or if the post-New Deal methods turn the Constitution into a malleable document, and not a text of "law" at all, there is reason to use the formal route more often. But if the Court as it stands is not likely to be so bad, and if public judgments about how to change the constitutional text are ill-informed and potentially harmful, there is much less to fear from reliance on the more informal vehicles of change that have come to characterize American constitutional life. If changed understandings of the Constitution through those informal routes—led sometimes democratically, sometimes judicially—are more informed, more easily corrected and more fruitfully gradual than the Article V method, then there is reason to prefer them to Article V and the great drama of amendment.

Thus the real issues behind the debate over constitutional amendment are different from what they seem. The important debates are about populism as a democratic ideal and the modern role of the Supreme Court. And no simple view about those debates would make much sense. As our history suggests, it would be foolish to favor one method of constitutional change to the exclusion of others. And without pretending to resolve those debates here, we may be able to make a little progress by insisting (with the Framers) that the Constitution is a republican document, not a populist document, embodying an aspiration to democracy and deliberation; that the Constitution does not create a system of government by referendum; and that the Constitution places a high premium on a system of public reason-giving in which officials do not simply respond to snapshots of public opinion.

A deliberative democracy is certainly not one in which the principal judgments of political morality are made by Supreme Court justices. But neither is it a system in which fundamental judgments are a product of plebiscites. The danger in the recent outpouring of enthusiasm for constitutional amendments is that it is essentially childish. The balanced budget amendment would not balance the budget (itself an ideal of uncertain value); instead of making the hard choices involved in appropriations and tax policy, it would constitutionalize an empty, unenforceable aspiration. A flag desecration amendment certainly would not promote patriotism and national unity, any more than a victims' rights amendment would have meaningful effects on crime. And it should be no surprise to find that the plebiscite-like quality of modern politics, captured in an astounding outburst of referenda at the state level, has led to amendment proposals that are mostly paybacks, bumper stickers and symbols.

To say this is emphatically not to say that "explicit and authentic" constitutional amendments deserve no place in American democracy. Sometimes amendments fix practical problems. Sometimes they reflect hard-won moral commitments. In such cases, the symbolic nature of the relevant amendments is nothing to deplore. And that is the point. Constitutional amendments have enduring importance in a system that prizes America's distinctive conception of sovereignty. That conception is badly served by those who see the Constitution as too sacred to be touched, but it is also badly served by those who think that sovereignty is located in coalitions that can be stirred up by controversial Supreme Court decisions, or that seek to solve national problems with slogans, innuendos and nostalgia.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN is author of *Legal Reasoning and Political Conflict* and *Free Markets and Social Justice*, both recently published by Oxford University Press.

Mr. Chips

BY DAVID E. SANGER

Only the Paranoid Survive: How to Exploit the Crisis Points That Challenge Every Company and Career by Andrew S. Grove

(Doubleday, 210 pp., $27.50)

It seemed like a good idea at the time. After years of selling its ever-more-powerful microprocessors to the likes of IBM, Compaq, the Japanese and computer makers around the world, Intel Corporation's executives were getting tired of getting none of the credit for the personal computer revolution. So they started advertising on television and insisting that computer makers put those little "Intel Inside" stickers on every box to make it clear that Intel made the brains. Good for name recognition, the corporate advisers said. Even better for the stock.

Then came the surprise. Soon after the now-ubiquitous Pentium chip went into production, a particularly persnickety user found a tiny rounding error when the chip performed division. Such bugs are commonplace with first-generation chips, and Intel's engineers soon sent a reassuring message through the company email: no problem. The mistake would happen about once every 9 billion times, meaning that the average users of a spreadsheet would run into trouble once every 27,000 years. Thinking like prudent engineers, they decided that no general (and embarrassing) recall of old chips was needed. They would fix the design for new chips, and move on.

But something had changed in the marketplace that even the shrewdest Intel executives—led by Andrew S. Grove, the company's chief executive—didn't grasp. In changing its corporate persona, Intel had also changed the nature of its business. It had turned the microprocessor from a generic part into a consumer product. And Intel had never thought of itself as selling anything to consumers. It had always been a company of engineers, founded by three "Fairchildren," escapees from Fairchild Semiconductor, Silicon Valley's first successful chip company.

Intel's founders—Robert Noyce, Gordon Moore and Andrew S. Grove—had put the place together in 1986 with a one-page business plan that was pockmarked

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with typographical errors and bravely predicted that many of its customers "will be located outside California." Revenues the first year were $2,672. And the only product was a slow memory chip. Almost as a sideshow, however, one of the company's brightest lights, Ted Hoff, played around with a chip that could actually be programmed with instructions. It was a bit of fancy for a Japanese customer called Busicom, which didn't know that Hoff had just created the world's first microprocessor. When Intel figured it out, it bought the technology back from Busicom for $60,000. Busicom immediately went out of business, and Japan has still not recovered from its stupidity. Hoff's chip eventually begot the Intel 8080 microprocessor, which begot the 286, the 386, the 486 and, a quarter decade later, Pentium.

The last of those chips quickly became the Jaguar of the '90s, and the source of Grove's new problem. Suddenly consumers were buying computers to get their hands on the high-speed chip under the hood. Of course, all that speed was not required for a bit of word processing and a quick Internet surf, but that wasn't the point. Image was the point. And no one wanted the embarrassment of being told their sleek new machine might occasionally run off a cliff all by itself—even if the engineers said it would happen only once every 27 millennia. Back in Silicon Valley, though, Intel still didn't get it. It first offered a free replacement to heavy-duty corporate users, but not to ordinary computer users who stare at that sticker every time they flip on their computers. That added insult to bad engineering, and the company was deluged with angry calls. Needless to say, anyone who wanted one soon got a free replacement chip.

The Pentium experience was more than a lesson in corporate humility at Intel. It was an example of how easily even the best-run companies in America can wander into the minefields of what Grove calls a "strategic inflection point," or, in chip-speak, a "10X change" in the environment. (Policy wonks and historians of science call this a "paradigm shift.") The challenge is knowing the difference between a shift in the market, which calls for a change of tactics, and the kind of fundamental change to which Grove devotes his pithy book.

Grove's central thesis is that the companies that don't breed sufficient paranoia are the companies most at risk. Only the paranoid survive, because only they worry about good news. Lurking behind all those glowing quarterly reports are the minefields that blow up the most promising companies, the ones that grow intoxicated with their own technological prowess. (Remember Apple?) Technology companies are not the only victims of 10X change, of course; but they are at higher risk of infection. The record industry, for example, nearly threw Sony out of the room when its executives suggested that maybe people could be convinced to buy their music on a CD. It would be easy to dismiss such folks as Luddites, but the same mistakes have been made by some of the fiercest advocates of technological change, who were simply appalled at the financial and human costs of facing the new world. And often customers drive the change: at Intel, Grove concedes, the company missed the fact that its clients were no longer the world's computer makers, its clients were the world's computer users.

A moment of full disclosure: I have myself held a small number of Intel shares for several years, acquired after I was no longer covering Intel. (Had I been investing in Intel in the early 1980s instead of reporting about it, I would no doubt be writing this from the deck of a yacht somewhere in the Caribbean.) For the record, the company's stock rose 130 percent last year: so much, so fast that it distorted some of the averages that measure the broader market's performance. These days Intel is usually discussed in the same breath with Microsoft, as a near monopoly business that uses its competitive advantage brilliantly to keep a stranglehold on the most lucrative computer platform in history. But Intel does not share, at least overtly, Microsoft's ambitions to take over the world. And Andrew Grove seems happy to plug along in Bill Gates's shadow. After all, the week after *Time* delved into Gates's relationship with his mother, *The Wall Street Journal* quoted analysts predicting that in a few years Intel may be "the most profitable company in the world."

Grove is at his best when he writes about what happened when he nearly asked the wrong questions, and came within a micron of missing the revolution that now bears Intel's little logo. The moment of disaster was born of success. IBM chose Intel's microprocessor as the brains at the center of its first PC. But this was still something of a side venture for the company. It had risen as a maker of memory chips, a business that Intel once owned. Other American companies moved in, and then, in the early '80s, came the Japanese. "People who came back from visits to Japan told scary stories," Grove recalls. Money was being poured into the memory chip business with abandon. Japan saw the domination of the memory business as its way into the heart of the electronics business; and they were building cleaner clean rooms, and turning out better chips.

At first Intel was in denial. Then it started losing money. The company was deeply divided between those who thought fancy new technology would do the trick and those who argued that Intel should head into special purpose memory chips to deflect competition from Japan's general-purpose products. "We had lost our bearings," writes Grove. "We were wandering the valley of death." At the time, the strategy that seems blindingly obvious today—that Intel had to get out of a losing competition and focus on what it did best, microprocessors—could not even be uttered in Intel's cubicles. Even Grove couldn't bring himself to say it. He hedged when the subject came up at dinner with his own executives. He mouthed Intel's public line, that memory chips were "technology drivers" that tested the outer limits of chip manufacturing ability. (When I was covering the subject in the early 1980s, he, and IBM, conned me into repeating this mantra in print.)

Intel employees in Oregon, where the memory chips were made, obviously had strong opinions on the subject; you can't make microprocessors at a memory-chip fabrication site any more easily than you can make airplanes at a bicycle factory. Then one day Grove asked Gordon Moore, the company's chief executive at the time, "If we got kicked out and the board brought in a new CEO, what do you think he would do?" "He would get us out of memories," Moore answered. They got out. By 1992, Intel was the world's biggest chip maker. The Japanese, who hadn't asked the same question, were watching as the Koreans did to them what they did to Intel. "Yet had we dithered longer," Grove notes, "we could have missed our chance at all this. We might have vacillated between a heroic effort to hang on to our dwindling share of the memory business and an effort that might have been too weak to project us into the exploding microprocessor market. We nearly became another Unisem, another Mostek, another Advanced Memory Systems."

Grove was not alone in his predicament. IBM bought 20 percent of Intel in the mid-'80s to make sure its supplier could stay afloat and then abruptly sold off its entire stake. Those were the days when personal computers were still a subject of wonderment. But few of the executives in Armonk, where the company's top executives stared out at ducks and thought deep thoughts about the future of computing, wanted to raise the question of whether, some day soon, microprocessor-driven desktop computers might make IBM's mainframes the

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Edsels of the electronic age. After all, a worldwide company of 400,000 souls had been built on the custom design and custom programming of the giant mainframes.

IBM's executives smiled and said sure, personal computers are wonderful inventions. But while IBM's engineers in the hinterlands of Florida and Texas talked about a "revolution," the closer you were to Armonk, the more likely you were to hear the words "product category." When Big Blue brought out its first home computer, a pathetically under-powered bomb called the PCjr, one of the company's top executives gushed to me that now housewives across America could change the way they organize recipes. His opinion of personal computers was as preposterous as his opinion of housewives. Faced with evidence that microprocessor-based computers were sucking away work that was formerly performed on mainframes and mini-computers, those same executives came up with a neat theory. Little computers, they said, would sell more big computers; after all, you would have to download data from the huge data processors that whizzed silently behind big glass doors. It was all a virtuous circle.

Eventually, of course, a lot of these explanations imploded, bringing on a painful era of downsizing and upheaval. At the time, however, nobody was about to challenge the industry leader. After all, the IBM PC set the industry standard, and the company itself was making money faster than one of those room-size machines could model the flight path of the space shuttle. Such blinders make a convincing case for bringing in new blood, which in the end is what saved IBM. But you can't blame the world's biggest computer company for an unwillingness to mess with success. It has happened before: people become emotionally invested in huge projects that cost millions of dollars, that require dedicated employees to devote endless hours of work, that break up marriages and wrack up millions of frequent-flyer miles—and turn out to solve the wrong problem. In the computer business, it happens more often than not. Tracy Kidder's *The Soul of a New Machine* chronicled the mad world of the engineers who developed a new mini-computer, but it was not long before that romanticized product was consigned to the trash-heap of electronic history.

The problem with Grove's otherwise searing analysis is that it ends at the boardroom and not in the Cabinet Room. For countries hit strategic inflection points as well, moments when national leaders seem unaware that there has been a 10X change in the political or economic environment. Countries, like companies, often can't tell a bad business cycle from an honest-to-goodness 10X change. Perhaps Japan is the best example. On the most simplistic level, it faced in the 1980s the same choice that Intel did: Do we keep making memory chips, or, overcoming all the same inertial forces that Grove faced within Intel, do we abandon the old product line and move into the riskier field of processors and software? Naturally the choice did not appear this stark to the Japanese; micro-electronics is only one of the country's many industries. But they are the industry driver, the technology that controls the pace of national productivity and change. "Take away cars and electronics," the head of Canon once told me, "and what do we have left? A shell of an economy."

I didn't realize, when he said that to me, how right he was. Japan's problem, in retrospect, was that it was unable to decide on a national scale to make the shift that Intel made on a corporate scale. No one can suggest that would have been easy. The key to Intel's success is that it established an industry standard, and fought off pretenders who wanted to either get a small piece of that action or topple the standard-bearer. It is harder for countries to pull off the same trick. Japan tried with high-definition television, but the effort failed because it chose a technology that wasn't advanced enough. The result is that Japan has broadcast HDTV programs throughout the country for five years now, but it is caught with the television equivalent of a Macintosh. Nice technology, but all the fancy new software is being written to run on Pentium chips.

Still, imagine for a moment that Japanese industrialists, at the height of their profit-reaping in the late 1980s, had picked up on the signals that a strategic inflection point was on the way. The once-powerful electronics bureau of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry had called everyone together and told the assembled executives that they have two years to get out of the memory-chip business, because it is a commodity market and the profit margins are dwindling to nothing. Instead, they changed the subject. The electronics firms that should have been watching their core businesses turned instead to Hollywood, believing their own spin that they would create a "synergy" between hardware and software. The only synergy, it turned out, was between rogue American producers and the sea of Japanese cash that washed up to their door. Sony eventually woke up to reality, and is bravely staying in the game. Matsushita couldn't take it and bailed out.

Only in the past year or so has the moral of the story sunk in, and suddenly there is talk in Japan of boosting spending on research and development, on basic science. Once again a few consortia are coming together, in an effort to replicate the magic of the 1970s, when Japanese firms joined forces to figure out how to manufacture the first memory chips. But the harsh reality is that Japan waited too long to bring out the new product line. To stay in business, it is moving the old products offshore at a phenomenal rate. That is further undercutting the lifetime employment system that the country desperately clung to for too long.

And now Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has declared that this muddling along cannot go on. He insists that the entire financial services industry is going to have to endure a "Big Bang" deregulation within five years. In Tokyo there are people who believe that Hashimoto means it. And so, a few weeks ago, they did the only prudent thing. They picked up the phone and screamed "Sell!" The Japanese market dropped 10 percent in a week. Now that's a strategic inflection point.

DAVID E. SANGER is an economic correspondent for *The New York Times*.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Give her the tools

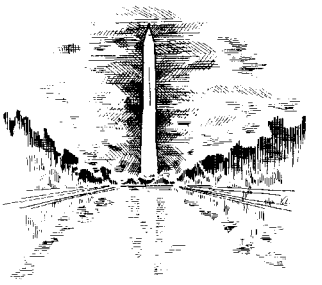
"Man is a tool-using animal ... without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all."
—Thomas Carlyle

I'VE ALWAYS DEARLY LOVED A hardware store. The earthy smell of wood chips and sawdust, reminiscent of childhood days at the circus; the comforting heaviness of a handful of nails scooped from the depths of a barrel; the pleasant whine of the rip saw slicing smoothly through sheets of plywood. And, in addition to these sensual pleasures, there is the Emersonian do-it-yourself challenge embodied in a place full of such unrealized possibility. A hardware store lays before you the raw materials, and dares you to turn them into something useful and perhaps beautiful. But, finally, and this is probably the real reason I love them, hardware stores are a kind of Toys 'R' Us for adults, a place to buy grown-up versions of Lincoln Logs, erector sets and Fisher-Price workbenches.

WHILE POUNDING AWAY ON MY own toy workbench, driving fat wooden pegs into perfectly pre-sized holes, I often watched my lawyer father—an unlikely carpenter in his Izod shirts and neatly pressed Levi's—sawing, drilling and hammering away on one project or another. The wood and glass house we lived in was full of his masterpieces—a burnished walnut cradle, towering bookshelves that seemed to fill every available inch of wall space, solid coffee tables and end tables with softly rounded edges, more than strong enough for a budding gymnast who liked to pretend they were balance beams. My father died many years ago, and while we still have the cradle, I'm not sure what happened to those tables. They were heavy and plain, but I was always amazed by the simple fact that my father had made them himself.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT I INHERITED my handiness from my father, but, more likely, I learned it from my mother, a 5'3" university professor who can wield a hammer with formidable accuracy. I have seen her chop firewood, install light fixtures, rewire phone jacks, repair leaky pipes and stain, paint and caulk just about everything. She taught me how to use toggle bolts, unclog drains, paint, hang wallpaper and spackle. Even more valuably, she also taught me that, at least when it comes to repairs and assembly, no men are required. Her attitude was that if something needed fixing, you might as well learn to do it yourself.

SO I DID. AND IT NEVER OCCURRED to me that there was anything wrong with that. Until recently. I had always possessed more in the way of guy skills than most of my guy friends. I know enough about my car to change the oil or a flat tire, and to figure out when a mechanic is lying. I can't cook or sew, but I can talk baseball. (Confession: my baseball savvy comes from a friend who once told me, when in doubt, to utter the authoritative-sounding phrase "Good pitching always beats good hitting." He was right; those magic words have won me the respect of many a baseball fan despite the fact that I have no idea what I'm talking about.) I can even chomp the occasional cigar.



IN THE COURSE OF SETTING UP MY new apartment, I've visited various hardware stores in search of practical necessities such as light bulbs, caulking, nails and paint. Basic stuff. And I've found that in addition to their old-fashioned tactile delights, hardware stores offer something even more old-fashioned: a certain unreconstructed skepticism about the practical capabilities of my gender. Lately, it seems I can't enter a hardware store without being immediately attacked by some condescending male employee who assumes I don't know grout from gravy. While I hate to discourage eager service, I have to point out that these ever-so-helpful guys weren't similarly assailing male customers. Once, as I was walking purposefully toward the lighting aisle, attempting to evade a particularly tenacious clerk, I happened to notice an obviously clueless man in the wallpaper aisle glancing desperately about for a store employee. And more than a few of my male friends have complained about similarly poor service. Why do most hardware store employees assume that a guy knows by instinct how to prep his walls for papering, but find it inconceivable that a woman could successfully navigate her way through the store without, say, buying a Phillips-head screwdriver when she needs a flat-head? (One clerk I encountered found it hard to believe that I might actually know the difference. When he challenged my choice of a Phillips-head, saying, "Are you sure that's the kind you need, little lady?" I told him: "Well, since my screws have that little crossy-thing on the top, I think I'll do just fine with the pointy one." It's safe to say that he missed the sarcasm.)

MY WORST HARDWARE STORE EXperience occurred about a year ago in Boston. After searching in vain for an inexpensive, attractive frame for my futon, I decided to build one. I carefully measured the mattress, then proceeded to the nearest Home Depot for the necessary lumber. As I was selecting my 2x4s, a man standing nearby (this time not a store employee) asked me what I planned to build. Sensing a fellow do-it-yourselfer, I outlined my plan. He shook his head, "Honey, you're doing it all wrong. That bed'll break the first night you sleep on it. Why don't you just buy a bed and forget all this nonsense about building one?" Resisting the urge to knock him upside the head with one of the 2x4s, I continued amassing my lumber. The bed I built with it held up just fine. Unfortunately, so have the attitudes of men in hardware stores. Just last week a well-meaning clerk approached me to see if I needed help picking out a nite-light.

OH, WELL. WHAT'S A LITTLE SEXism when you're feeling so fundamentally self-reliant? Anyway, I've recently learned that there are other places to turn to besides the neighborhood hardware store when I'm looking for the simple pleasure of building or repairing something myself. There is, on the World Wide Web, for example, Learn2.com (http://www.learn2.com; it bills itself as "the ability utility"), an ingenious Internet site that gives step-by-step, generally noncondescending instructions for everything from catching a mouse ("cheese is actually not the best bait") to fixing a leaky faucet ("Step 1: Turn off the water"), to understanding baseball. (Curiously, the latter mentions nothing about the superiority of pitching over hitting.) With Learn2, you don't have to put yourself at the mercy of an overpriced lube chain to get your oil changed; save the $40 and do it yourself ("Tip 1: Make sure the emergency brake is on"). Emerson would be proud. And fortunately for those of us who are domestically challenged, Learn2 also gives tips on ironing, making rice and poaching eggs.

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